



# A HISTORY METHODISM

COMPRISING

*A VIEW OF THE RISE OF THIS REVIVAL OF SPIRITUAL RELIGION  
IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, AND  
OF THE PRINCIPAL AGENTS BY WHOM IT WAS  
PROMOTED IN EUROPE AND AMERICA;*

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

The Doctrine and Polity of Episcopal Methodism  
in the United States, and the Means and Manner of its Extension  
Down to A.D. 1884.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

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BY

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VOLUME I.

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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**T**HIS work was begun at the request of the Centenary Committee, and was encouraged by the recommendation of the College of Bishops, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Much the larger portion of the volume deals in that wherein all Methodists agree. I have endeavored to give, along with sketches of the chief actors in preparing and carrying forward the great work of God, the truths that were vital to it, and the type of Christian experience developed by it; also the gradual and providential evolution of the system, both in doctrine and polity; so that one who honors the book with a perusal may come to the end, not only with a tolerably clear understanding of the polity and doctrines of Episcopal Methodism, but, what is of infinitely greater importance, he may obtain some personal knowledge of that way of salvation which Wesleyans teach.

No one, with proper ideas, ever looked over a life that had been lived, or a book that had been written, without seeing and feeling how it might have been bettered. In giving this volume to the public I am mindful that the proverb, "The best is often the enemy of the good," applies to authorship as well as to many other things. By waiting to realize our highest ideal of excellence, we may be restrained from making a contribution to religious literature which, however imperfect, would be of some service.

Several local histories have been written, and well written, giving account of the rise and progress of Methodism in States and Conferences. Of these I have made mention in the following pages, and, as will be seen, have made use in the preparation of this more general view of the Church.

Moral or abstract truth knows no point of the compass, but historical truth does; and the truth of history proves this. Methodism in the South has suffered injustice from the manner in which it has been presented by learned, honest, and able writers in the North. The writer does not presume to be free from the infirmities to which he is liable in common with others. He proposes to tell the truth as he sees it; and this may lead him to tell truths affecting others which they have not seen, and to present admitted facts in a different light.

The reader is advertised that this is not a history of Southern Methodism, but of Methodism from a Southern point of view. In the South, Methodism was first successfully planted, and from thence it spread North, and East, and West. If all the members claimed by all the branches be counted, there is a preponderance of American Methodism now, as at the beginning, in the South.

Of course I am largely indebted to writers who have gone before, and I make my acknowledgment unreservedly of such indebtedness. The first part of the volume treats of matters that have passed through the hands of many writers; and in various forms of statement these stock subjects have gone into history. Little more can now be done than to present a judicious compilation from the



best sources of information; and the reader, who has not access to these or leisure to consult them, will prefer utility here to originality.

The list of books appended indicates those most consulted, besides biographies and autobiographies and fugitive sketches contained in newspaper files running through many years. The Minutes and Journals of General and Annual Conferences from 1773 to the present, the old Disciplines and Magazines and Reviews, have been chief sources. This method is adopted as more convenient than burdening the margin with foot-notes. When an authority is therein specifically named it is done not only to show the source of information, if it be questioned but as a suggestion to the reader to consult the same if fuller information is desired on the subject.

Methodism has been long enough and potent enough in the world to enter into general history, and materials for its delineation begin now to be found everywhere. But certain writers have wrought in this mine more, and to more advantage, than others. Jesse Lee was the father of our Church history. After him Dr. Nathan Bangs gathered and compiled richly and industriously, and his writings, without the graces of style, have a high merit. Dr. Abel Stevens has brought all under obligations who come after him. His patience and skill in collecting and sifting Methodist history, and the literary style which he has displayed, cannot be too much admired. The first wrote when there was no North and no South in Methodism; the second, when these began to be; the third, when they were realities.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the Rev. Luke Tyerman has not only given a great amount of fresh and readable matter, but has critically worked the life out of several favorite legends that were passing into fixed history. His manner of treating some subjects has given offense, justly or unjustly, to a few Wesleyans; but no writer of Methodist history, since Southey, has so generally (and in his case favorably) influenced the opinion of the outside world, and given direction to the drift of secular writers, as Mr. Tyerman. His volumes are a *thesaurus*. Having access to original sources, and the taste and skill for making and combining researches, and the candor (which, in the opinion of his critics, verges on an affectation, and therefore an overdoing, of independence) to utter them, he has superseded many volumes by his own. It is the quality of an Englishman (and if a fault, leaning to virtue's side) to take his observations of all things in heaven and earth from his national stand-point. With all his industry in collecting information, and his skill in presenting it through copious volumes that never weary the reader, Mr. Tyerman was so unsatisfactory in his treatment of American Methodism, at a material point, that the New York edition of his great work required an Appendix from an American author (Dr. Stevens) to set the English author right; and this, the Appendix does thoroughly. If one of Tyerman's breadth and fairness needs such correction, it is no strange thing if Stevens, Simpson, Porter, Daniels, and others of that latitude, have not always presented Methodism at the other end of their country in a favorable or acceptable light. It is due to the condition of astronomers rather than to their disposition that some constellations in the heavens cannot be viewed from certain stations on the earth's surface.

It is hoped that this attempt by a Southern writer at a general history of Methodism may have the result which Jesse Lee sought, as stated in his Preface: "I desire to show to all our societies and friends that the doctrines which

we held and preached in the beginning we have continued to support and maintain uniformly to the present day. We have changed the economy and discipline of our Church at times, as we judged for the benefit and happiness of our preachers and people, and the Lord has wonderfully owned and prospered us. It may be seen from the following account how the Lord has, from the very small beginnings, raised us up to be a great and prosperous people. It is very certain that the goodness of our doctrine and discipline, our manner of receiving preachers, and of sending them into different circuits, and the frequent changes among them from one circuit to another, have greatly contributed to the promotion of religion, the increase of our societies, and the happiness of our preachers." H. N. M.

Vanderbilt University October 1, 1881.

**A LIST OF SOME OF THE AUTHORITIES CONSULTED AND USED.**

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 (London.) 1856.  
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 volumes of this convenient and valuable collection have been published.  
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 rience, etc., by himself. (Alexandria, Va.) 1806.  
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 Proceedings of the Ecumenical Methodist Conference, held in City Road Chapel, London  
 September, 1881. Introduction by Rev. William Arthur, M.A.; 8vo, pages 632.  
 The Introduction of Protestantism into Mississippi and the South-west: Rev. J. G. Jones  
 1866. The MS. History of Methodism in Mississippi, by the same author, has been kindly  
 submitted for reference, and found to be very useful. This interesting addition to our denom-  
 inational literature ought to be published.  
 The voluminous manuscripts and letters of the late Rev. William Winans, D.D., have been  
 loaned the author by the kindness of his daughter, Mrs. Mary Winans Wall, of Louisiana.  
 Dr. Winans, with his own painstaking hand, copied the letters which he wrote, even on ordi-  
 nary topics, and preserved them. His times and correspondence extended through the most  
 important periods of our history; and just surprise has been expressed that so long a time  
 has elapsed since his death (1857) without any publication, in whole or in part, of his literary  
 remains.  
 The papers and correspondence of the late Bishop Soule—obligingly furnished by his  
 daughter, Mrs. Conwell, of Nashville, and his nephew, Rev. Francis A. Soule, of the State of  
 New York—have been found valuable, though not extensive.

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# HISTORY OF METHODISM.



## CHAPTER I.

Church Founders—Providential Instruments—The Wesley Family: Its Origin and Times.

IT was not new doctrine but new life the first Methodists sought for themselves and for others. To realize in the hearts and conduct of men the true ideal of Christianity, to maintain its personal experience, and to extend it—this was their design; and their system of government grew up out of this, and was accordingly shaped by it.

The mission of Luther was to reform a corrupted Christianity; that of Wesley, to revive a dying one. Lutheranism dealt more with controversy; Wesleyanism, with experience. The abuses and errors of Rome, its defiant attitude and oppressive rule, made combatants of the Reformers. Their prayer was, "Teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." The Methodists came forth as evangelists. They persuaded men. With existing institutions and creeds they had no quarrel. "In their bosoms there was no rankling grudge against authorities; there was no particle of that venom which, wherever it lodges, infects and paralyzes the religious affections." Their controversy was not with Church or State authorities, but with sin and Satan; and their one object was to save souls.

The way of a Dissenter is to begin by finding fault with others. "We begin," they said, "by finding fault with ourselves." Methodists never sympathized with those who deny the "form of godliness:" it is decent in their eyes and useful, and they cared for it; but they were more careful to have "the power thereof."

Whenever the Lord would do a work in the earth a *man* is got ready; and the study of that man and of his providential preparation is a fit introduction to the history of the work. St. Paul's truism, "For every house is builded by some man," is not contradicted by what follows—"but he that built all things is God." The word *founder* grates harshly upon some ears when it is ap-

plied to the Church, but ecclesiastical history justifies it. Without irreverence, and without derogating from the honor of its divine Head, men may be called founders of those various sects by which the Church is seen to exist in the world. Such instruments God has raised up all along the ages, and their lives and labors have made eras. "The Lord built him a Solomon, that Solomon might build him a house;" and Solomon's genius was seen in every part of the sacred Temple. The Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregational, Protestant Episcopal, Moravian, and Baptist Churches all bear the impress of those master-builders who, under God, shaped their polity, formulated their creeds, and illustrated their spirit.

If the four Gospels show the individuality of their inspired authors, and the style of the man is seen in the deliverance of the apostle, we may not be surprised if the character of founders can be traced in the religious bodies to which they stand thus providentially related. This admission of the human element is agreeable to the divine origin and authority of the Church. Its truths abide, its principles change not, for they are of God; but the bringing them to bear upon the world, for its salvation, according to times and circumstances, is of human devising under the promise of gracious guidance. Bible doctrines cannot be increased or diminished; but they may be arranged and presented with more or less force, clearness, and consistency by the various schools of religious thought whose nomenclature testifies to their parentage.

The history of Methodism cannot be given without a biography of John Wesley. To him belongs the distinction of Founder. Great men by a natural law come forward in groups; but to insure the success and unity of a movement, there must be a solitary preëminence. While Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, John Fletcher, and Thomas Coke were mighty auxiliaries, it is around John Wesley that the religious movement of the eighteenth century, called Methodism, centers. He was born June 17, 1703—the son of Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, England.

The founder of Methodism makes once an allusion to his "grandfather's father"—Bartholomew. It was during the closing years of the long reign of Elizabeth that Bartholomew Wesley was born—about the year 1600. While at the university

he applied himself to the study of physic, as well as of divinity; and the knowledge which he acquired was of great advantage to him in the dark days of his after-life. In 1640 he was inducted to the rectory of Charmouth, and in 1650 to that of Catherston; both of which he held until 1662, when, having espoused the side of the Puritans, Bartholomew Wesley, like many others, was driven from his rectories by the Act of Uniformity. After this, though he preached occasionally, he had to support himself and his family by the practice of physic.\*

At the restoration of the Stuarts in the person of Charles II. (1661), the High-church party, with king and court on their side, set about the suppression of Presbyterians, Independents, and all Non-conformists. The Act of Uniformity was enforced in its rigor, and upward of two thousand ministers, with their families, were ejected from their livings.

A glance at some of the ministers ejected and silenced shows how this act impoverished the pulpit of that day: Edmund Calamy, who studied at the rate of sixteen hours a day, and was one of the most popular preachers in the capitol; Matthew Pool, who spent ten years upon his "*Synopsis Criticorum*," in five volumes folio; John Goodwin, the Arminian author of "*Redemption Redeemed*;" John Owen, Stephen Charnock, John Flavel; Rich-

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\*The author of "*Memorials of the Wesley Family*" has gone back of that: "The father of Bartholomew Wesley was Sir Herbert Westley, of Westleigh, in the county of Devon. His mother was Elizabeth de Wellesley, of Dangan, in Ireland. What we have hitherto known of this distinguished family has marked them as remarkable for learning, piety, poetry, and music. We must now add these other equally peculiar characteristics, loyalty and chivalry. Taking one step only backward in tracing their genealogy, we find in both the father and mother of Bartholomew Wesley persons who were permitted intercourse with the leading minds of the age, and who were privileged to take an active part in molding that age in its moral, religious, and social aspects. A knight of the shire was a person of distinction and influence. The issue of the marriage of Sir Herbert and Elizabeth Wesley was three sons, named respectively William, Harphan, and Bartholomew. The two elder of these appear to have died without issue. Bartholomew married the daughter of Sir Henry Colley, of Kildare, Ireland. In person he was of small stature; called 'the puny parson.' The average height of the Wesleys was from five feet four to five feet six inches. Between this limited range stood Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth, and his two sons, John and Charles. The same standard of height characterizes those descendants of the family who still survive, belonging to the Epworth branch." And John says of himself: "In the year 1769 I weighed one hundred and twenty-two pounds; in the year 1783 I weighed not a pound more nor a pound less."



ard and Joseph Alleine, whose well-known practical writings have been blessed to thousands; Richard Baxter, Philip Henry, and John Howe.

By Act of Uniformity it was provided that "every parson, vicar, or other minister whatsoever, now enjoying any ecclesiastical benefice or promotion, within this realm of England," who neglected or refused to declare publicly, before his congregation, his "unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all things contained and prescribed" in the Book of Common Prayer, before the feast of St. Bartholomew (1662), should be deprived of his place. All school-masters who refused to subscribe to this declaration were to suffer three months' imprisonment. It also provided that if any minister, not episcopally ordained, should presume to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper after St. Bartholomew's day (August 24), he should, for every such offense, forfeit the sum of £100; and if he presumed to lecture or preach in any church, chapel, or other place of worship whatever, within the realm of England, he should suffer three months' imprisonment in the common jail.

In 1664 the Conventicle Act was passed, which provided that "every person above sixteen years of age present at any meeting of more than five persons besides the household, under a pretense of any exercise of religion, in other manner than is the practice of the Church of England, shall, for the first offense, be sent to gaol three months, till he pay a £5 fine; for the second offense, six months, till he pay a £10 fine; and for the third offense, be transported to some of the American plantations." To complete the triumph of the oppressor, and to deprive both ministers and people of any comfort, as Non-conformists, Parliament in 1665 added outrage to injury, by passing the execrable Five Mile Act, which provided that it should be a penal offense for any Non-conformist minister to teach in a school, or to come within five miles (except as a traveler in passing) of any city, borough, or corporate town, or of any place in which he had preached or taught since the passing of the Act of Uniformity.

In 1675 the Test Act was passed, which provided that all who refused to take the oaths and to receive the sacrament, according to the rites of the Church of England, should be debarred from public employment. This was the last turn of the screw. The Revolution of 1688 dethroned the Stuarts, and the Act of

Toleration became law in 1689, securing liberty in the worship of God to Protestant Dissenters.

John, the only son of the ejected Bartholomew Wesley, was born about the year 1636. Even when a boy at school he had deep religious convictions and began to keep a diary of "God's gracious dealings" with him, which, with slight interruptions, was continued to the end of his life. At the usual age he was entered a student of Oxford and became M.A. At one time he strongly wished to go as a missionary to Maryland, in America. Probably the expense of such a journey presented difficulties which he found it impossible to surmount. He was never episcopally ordained, but was ordained in the same way as Timothy—by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, and possibly without even that much ceremony. He passed his examination before Cromwell's "Triers," and was appointed to a living in May, 1658. A man of "gifts and grace," his ministry was the means of converting sinners in every place in which it was exercised, and he preached in many places. Under the persecutions that followed the Restoration, he was four times imprisoned, one imprisonment extending till very near the day when the Act of Uniformity finally expelled both father and son. He came joyfully home, and preached each Lord's-day till August 17, 1662, when he delivered his farewell sermon to a weeping audience, from Acts xx. 32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace." John Wesley died about the age of forty-three, and left behind him several sons and daughters. George, his fourth son, emigrated to America. The faithful widow survived for half a century.

Dr. A. Clarke calls attention to the fact that the grandfather of the founder of Methodism was a lay preacher and an itinerant evangelist. Indeed, we find in this John Wesley's history an epitome of the later Methodism. Samuel, his son, was educated at the Free School at Dorchester. Young Wesley remained here until he was a little more than fifteen years of age, when he was sent to an academy in London, where he continued until he had nearly arrived at the age of twenty-one. He came into the world four months after that dark day of St. Bartholomew, when his father and his grandfather, with two thousand other godly ministers of Christ, were ejected from their churches and driven from their homes. Like them he was intended for the Christian

ministry; but, considering the treatment which they had experienced at the hands of the episcopal party, it was scarcely probable that their youthful descendant would feel a wish to enter the ministry of the Established Church. His father and his grandfathers, though they had all been the occupants of Church livings, were, so far as prelacy and the use of the liturgy are concerned, Dissenters; and his sympathies were with them. He acknowledges that when at the Dissenters' School "he was forward enough to write lampoons and pasquils against Church and State, "was fired with hopes of suffering;" "and often wished to be brought before kings and rulers, because he thought what he did was done for the sake of Christ." Subsequently, by a course of reading and reasoning, he was led to change his opinions, and formed a resolution to renounce the Dissenters and attach himself to the Established Church.

He lived at that time with his mother and an old aunt, both of whom were too strongly attached to the Dissenting doctrines to have borne, with any patience, the disclosure of his design. He therefore got up early one morning, and, without acquainting any one with his purpose, set out for Oxford, and entered himself at Exeter College. To ride to college was a thing not to be thought of: to use his own expression, he "*footed it*." His books, his clothes, and his other luggage, were all probably carried in a knapsack on his back. Samuel Wesley entered college as a *servitor*. A "servitor" is a student who attends and waits on other scholars or students, and receives, as a compensation, his maintenance. Such was the position of young Wesley. He was determined to secure the benefits of a university education; and, in the absence of money and of friends, he became a servant in order to find himself bread. There was no disgrace in this; and yet it is not difficult to imagine that, notwithstanding his cleverness, he would be subjected to taunts from beardless youths, who, in all respects except one, were his inferiors. A young man, twenty-one years of age, respectably connected, but poor as poverty could make him, he resolved upon the acquisition of academic fame; and, in the struggle, patiently, if not cheerfully, submitted to annoyances for the sake of obtaining that upon which his heart was set. Besides attending to the humiliating duties of a servitor, he composed exercises for those who had more money than mind, and gave instructions to others who

wished to profit by his lessons; and thus, by toil and frugality, the fatherless and friendless scholar not only managed to support himself, but when he retired from Oxford, in 1688, with B.A. attached to his name, he was seven pounds fifteen shillings richer than he was when he entered it in 1683. Nor is this all. Whilst occupied with his daily duties, his benevolent heart would not permit him to live wholly to himself. He yearned to benefit others; and it is a remarkable coincidence that the objects of his sympathy were of the same class as those who, forty-five years afterward, were visited and helped by his sons, John and Charles, and the other Oxford Methodists. "Notwithstanding the weightiness of his college work, and the lightness of his college purse," he found time to visit the wretched inmates of Oxford jail, and relieved them as far as he was able. Writing to his two sons, in 1730, when they had begun of their own accord to visit the same prison-house, he says: "Go on, in God's name, in the path to which your Saviour has directed you, and that track wherein your father has gone before you; for when I was an undergraduate at Oxford I visited those in the castle there, and reflect on it with great satisfaction to this day. Walk as prudently as you can, though not fearfully, and my heart and prayers are with you." \*

Samuel Wesley was ordained a priest of the Church of England in 1689, twelve days after the Prince and Princess of Orange were declared by Parliament to be King and Queen of Great Britain. As a proof of his loyalty, he wrote the first defense of the government that appeared after William and Mary's accession. At the time he entered upon his ministerial career, there were in the English Church some of the most distinguished divines that it has ever had: Stillingfleet; Tillotson, whose sermons were regarded as a standard of finished oratory; Thomas Kenn, author of the "Morning and Evening Hymns;" Robert South, William Fleetwood; Gilbert Burnet, author of the "History of the Reformation;" William Beveridge; Daniel Whitby, who, in 1703, published in two volumes folio his "Commentary on the New Testament."

Samuel Wesley's first appointment was a curacy, with an income of £28 a year. He was then appointed chaplain on board a man-of-war, where he began his poem on the Life of Christ.

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\* The Life and Times of Rev. Samuel Wesley, M.A.

His ecclesiastical income for these few years' services that he rendered was small, but he increased the amount by his industry and writings. It was while he held such uncertain positions that he married, he and his wife living in lodgings until after the birth of their first-born. The young lady who became his wife was Susanna, the youngest and twenty-fourth child of her mother, and the twenty-fifth child of her father, Dr. Samuel Annesley, one of the leading Non-conformist ministers of London.\*

Susanna Annesley, in person, is said to have been both graceful and beautiful. The accomplishments of her mind were of the highest order, and for womanly virtues she has probably never been surpassed. She became the mother of nineteen children, and was remarkable for her system and success in teaching and training them. "No man," says Southey, "was ever more suitably mated than Samuel Wesley. The wife whom he chose was, like himself, the child of a man eminent among the Non-conformists; and, like himself, in early life she had chosen her own path.

She had reasoned herself into Socinianism, from which her husband reclaimed her. She was an admirable woman, an obedient wife, an exemplary mother, and a fervent Christian. The marriage was blessed in all its circumstances; it was contracted in the prime of their youth; it was fruitful; and death did not divide them till they were both full of days."

The mother of Samuel Wesley was the daughter of a distinguished and learned man, John White, a "perpetual fellow" of one of Oxford's oldest colleges. She was the niece of another

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\*He was born in 1620, and closed a useful ministry of fifty-five years in 1696. From his early childhood his heart was set on preaching; and, to qualify himself for that sacred work, he began, when he was only five or six years old, seriously to read the Bible; and such was his ardor that he bound himself to read twenty chapters daily, a practice which he continued to the end of life. At fifteen years of age he went to Oxford, where he took the degree of LL.D. In 1648 he preached the fast-day sermon before the House of Commons, which by order was printed. He had two of the largest congregations in London. Samuel Annesley was of so hale and hardy a constitution as to endure the coldest weather without using either gloves or fire. For many years he seldom drank any thing but water, and, to the day of his death, he could read the smallest print without spectacles. A short time before he died his joy was such that he exclaimed, "I cannot contain it! What manner of love is this to a poor worm? I cannot express the thousandth part of the praise due to Christ. I'll praise thee, and rejoice that there are others that can praise thee better." His last words were: "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness—satisfied satisfied." (Tyerman.)

man of mark, the celebrated Dr. Thomas Fuller, the Church historian. It is an interesting fact that the father of Susanna Wesley's mother was named John White, also. He entered Oxford at seventeen. In 1640 he was elected Member of Parliament, and joined in all the proceedings which led to the overthrow of the Established Church. He was appointed chairman of the Committee for Religion, and was also a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. In a speech of his, made in the House of Commons and published in 1641, he contends that the office of bishop and presbyter is the same; and that the offices of chancellors, vicars, surrogates, and registrars are all of human origin and ought to be abolished, as being altogether superfluous and of no service to the Church; that episcopacy had been intrusted with the care of souls for more than eighty years; and now, as a consequence, nearly four-fifths of the churches throughout the kingdom were held by idle or scandalous ministers. And what though such ministers be reported to their bishops? The most they got, he said, was a mild reproof; whereas the same bishops were quick-sighted and keen-scented to hunt down any man that preached the true gospel, and to silence or expel him.—These two John Whites do not appear to have been akin to each other, but their blood met in the founder of Methodism.

The first home of Samuel and Susanna Wesley was South Ormsby. Withdrawn from London, and settled down to the seclusion of a small country village, he had ample opportunity to study, read, write, and preach. He was then twenty-eight years old, and his wife was in her twenty-second year, with their infant son Samuel just turned four months old. The rectory-house was little better than a mud-built hut, and in that hovel Samuel Wesley and his noble young wife lived five years. Here the rector's wife brought him one child additional every year, and did her best to make £50 per annum go as far as possible; and here he wrote some of the most able works he ever published. The work by which he is best known was published in 1693, and entitled, "The Life of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. A heroic poem in ten books, dedicated to her Most Sacred Majesty Queen Mary." The queen, to whom it was dedicated, conferred on him the living of Epworth, in the county of Lincoln, "without any solicitation on his part, or without his

once thinking of such a favor." "The living was in itself a good one, being worth, in the currency of those times, about £200 a year, and Samuel Wesley's family was already large. He was in debt, and the fees necessary to be paid before entering on the living added to his debt. On his tombstone it is inscribed that he was thirty-nine years rector of that parish.

John Wesley was born there, June 17, 1703, and his brother Charles, December 18, 1707. It was a great advantage to have had such an ancestry; the laws of heredity could hardly present a richer and finer combination. Greater still was the advantage of being born and brought up under the influences of the Epworth parsonage. It was a household that seems to have been providentially constituted for preparing chosen instruments. The moral elevation and intellectual vigor of the father and an elder brother, the refining power of variously gifted sisters, the uncommon mother, the honest struggles with poverty, and the opportune openings for such higher education as could not be imparted at home, all conspired to prepare instruments "fit for the kingdom of God."

[This Chapter is compiled from *The Wesley Memoria. Volume; Memorials of the Wesley Family; Smith's History of Wesleyan Methodism Taylor's Wesley and Methodism; and Eyerman's Life and Times of Rev. Samuel Wesley M. A.*]

## CHAPTER II.

Moral Condition of England at the Rise of Methodism: Causes of It—Testimony of Secular and Religious Writers—The Effect of the Methodist Revival on the Churches; Its Influence on the State.

THE beginning of the Reformation was Justification by Faith; but this truth was, to a lamentable degree, soon lost sight of in the struggle it brought on with the power of popery. Ecclesiastical revolution, more than evangelical revival, occupied men's minds. There was a relapse into formalism, of which the best that could be said was—it was not papal formalism. The Lutheran movement, to its great spiritual disadvantage, was complicated with State-churchism. It lacked gospel discipline. To a deputation from Moravia, urging upon him the necessity of combining scriptural discipline and Christian practice with sound doctrine, Luther replied: "With us things are not sufficiently ripe for introducing such holy exercises in doctrine and practice as we hear is the case with you. Our cause is still in a state of immaturity, and proceeds slowly; but do you pray for us."

This imperfection in the Reformation on the Continent was not lessened by the manner of its introduction into England. That libidinous and cruel monarch, Henry VIII., was probably not much attracted by its spiritual aspect; but he was well pleased with a doctrine that justified him in repudiating the pope. Thus he himself became head of the Established Church in his own realm, and got good riddance of a horde of foreign ecclesiastics hard to govern and greedy of revenues.

The truth of God will make its way even under many and heavy disadvantages. Two years later (1536) an English version of the Bible was first printed; and the doctrines of the Reformation were about this time faithfully preached by Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and other pious ministers. During the short reign of Edward VI. the reformed doctrines obtained extensive influence, and copies of the Scriptures were circulated as freely as the state of learning and the circumstances of the people would allow. Thirty-five editions of the New Testament and fourteen of the complete Bible were printed and published in England during the six years and a half of the young king's reign.



The dawning hope which these propitious circumstances justified was obscured by the death of this prince and the accession of Mary (1553). She restored the papal authority! Hooper, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and many others, were burned; and hundreds more perished in loathsome prisons and by various other hardships and tortures.

Mary died, and Elizabeth ascended the throne (1558). Her grand purpose appears to have been to reëstablish the Reformation; and so far as legislation can change the religion of a country, this was accomplished, and the whole form of religion was established substantially as it is found at present in the English Church.\* With the accession of Elizabeth gospel truth was again preached; but on the settlement of the national Church, not a few of the most pious and spiritually-minded of the Protestants were lost to her pulpits, because so many rites and usages, which they deemed remnants of popery, were retained. A high Puseyite authority says: "The Protestant confession was drawn up with the purpose of including Catholics;"† and thus two wrongs were perpetrated: elements of antichristian error were retained, and conscientious followers of Christ were excluded. Notwithstanding this, there was a great circulation of gospel truth, which germinated and produced fruit during that and the following generations.

The rapid growth of Puritanism during this reign greatly contributed to the events which afterward occurred. Much popular discontent prevailed with the but partial purification of the Church from papal errors, and Puritanism began its work of protest, reformation, and honest rebellion.

The death of Elizabeth (1603) ended the Tudor dynasty and placed James I., of the house of Stuart, on the throne of England, and brought it and Scotland under the same king. This reign gave the world the present English Bible—an incalculable benefit to the advancement of religion. It also furnished the Book of Sports by royal declaration (1618), for the purpose of

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\* But the depth of this outward change is best seen in the fact that out of nine thousand four hundred beneficed clergymen in the kingdom, only fifteen bishops, twelve archdeacons, fifteen heads of colleges, fifty canons, and eighty parochial priests—in all one hundred and seventy-two persons—quitted their preferments rather than change their religion from the extreme popery of Mary's reign to what is called the thorough Protestantism of that of Elizabeth.

† Oxford Tracts for the Times, No. XC. ‡ George Smith, F.A.S.

promoting Sunday amusements. By this means free and full liberty and encouragement were given for the "dancing of men and women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsun-ales, morris-dancers, May-poles, and other sports, after the Church services on Sundays." And his majesty's pleasure was declared to be that the bishops should take measures for constraining the people to conform to these practices.

Charles I. succeeded his father (1625); weak in judgment, passionate in temper, and obstinate in disposition. Like all his family, he was fond of arbitrary government, and had an evident partiality for popery. His queen was a papist. This king found himself an heir to huge debts, and all the embarrassments which royal wants involve. Unskillful in government, he soon became embroiled in difficulties with his Parliament. That typical High-churchman, Archbishop Laud, was his trusted counselor and his chief calamity. Through the piety and energy of the Puritans, and the zeal for Calvinistic tenets with which they now began to be inflamed, the people were to a greater extent than ever hostile to the State Church, and disposed to regard the government which patronized and sustained it as partial and unjust. Laud urged his royal master to exasperating persecutions and conscientiously encouraged his popish proclivities. The civil wars began, and both lost their heads.

The House of Commons was now the government. The Presbyterians were paramount in it, and proceeded to remodel the Church on the plan of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. It was ordered that the Solemn League and Covenant should be taken by all persons above the age of eighteen; and, as this instrument bound all who received it to endeavor to extirpate Episcopal Church government, its enforcement led to the ejection of one thousand six hundred beneficed clergymen from their livings. But if we may rely on the testimony of Burnet, Baxter, and others, all the ejections of the period did not take place on political or sectarian grounds, many having been occasioned by the gross ignorance, shameful neglect of duty, or notorious immorality of the ministers.

Puritanism, with all its virtues, had strong and persistent vices. It early created a High-churchism of its own, and claimed as exclusive scriptural authority for presbytery as its Episcopal antagonists, "the judicious Hooker" and others, have asserted for prelacy. There was, indeed, scarcely any part of ecclesiastical

polity, except prelacy, against which Puritans had inveighed when in subjection that they did not adopt and practice when in power. Milton declares that the men who had preached so earnestly against the avarice and pluralities of bishops and other ministers, as soon as they had the power, began to practice with the most grasping cupidity all the abuses which they had condemned. Those who had pleaded so earnestly for liberty of conscience, and who had deprecated the interference of the civil powers in matters purely religious, now that they were at the helm of affairs, were of another mind.

Oliver Cromwell and the predominant element of the army leaned to Independency, and coming into supreme power he proclaimed and practiced freedom to worship God. The nation was weary of intestine strife; and, without having obtained civil liberty by the bloody struggle, sat down contentedly under his sway, in the enjoyment of religious toleration. The transfer of power from the Presbyterian to the Independent body does not appear to have made any immediate alteration in the organization of the State Church, beyond a device that deprived presbyteries of the right of approving or rejecting ministers. The Protector appointed thirty-eight persons, whom he called "Triers," selected from the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Independents, who were to examine and receive all candidates for the ministry. Their instructions required them to judge whether they could approve every such person, for "the grace of God in him, his holy and unblamable conversation, as also for his knowledge and utterance, able and fit to preach the gospel." Five of these commissioners were sufficient to approve a minister.

The Commonwealth proceeded to prohibit immorality by law. Vice was punished with Draconian severity. Adultery was a capital crime for the first offense. Fornication was punished with three months' imprisonment for the first offense; for the second, with death. Public amusements, from masques in the mansions of the great down to wrestling and grinning matches on village greens, were vigorously attacked. All the May-poles in England were ordered to be hewn down, the play-houses dismantled, the spectators fined, and the actors whipped at the cart's tail. Magistrates dispersed festive meetings, and put fiddlers in the stocks. The external appearance of religion was so rigidly enforced as to be largely productive of hypocrisy.

Under the Commonwealth, Oliver Cromwell extended his country's prowess and wealth. The stern virtues of his Roundheads and Ironsides made themselves felt at home and abroad. Effeminate vice became unfashionable, and much was done during this period to promote and establish a thoroughly Protestant feeling and judgment, and to extend real religion among the people. But the country, at length, became impatient of enduring this government. The people saw that they had only changed an hereditary monarchy for the rule of an absolute governor, and this conviction prepared the way for the Restoration. On the death of Cromwell, his son Richard was declared Lord Protector in his stead; but the reins of power soon fell from his feeble grasp. He retired into private life, and Charles II., eldest son of the late king, was placed on the throne.

One of the most fatal errors ever made in political affairs was committed in the hasty restoration of this monarch. If ordinary caution had been used, the constitutional liberty of the country might have been placed on a firm foundation. But this favorable opportunity was thrown away. Instead of being restored under such guarantees as were calculated to secure the liberty of the subject and the freedom of religion, Charles was placed on the throne with such precipitancy that the event assumed rather the appearance of a triumph of those principles and practices which caused the ruin of his father.

By order of Parliament the Solemn League and Covenant,\* the well-known symbol of Presbyterian ascendancy—which had been taken down from the walls of the House of Commons—was burned by the common hangman; the hangman first tearing the docu-

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\*The Solemn League and Covenant was a contract agreed to by the Scots, in the year 1638. In 1643 it was brought into England; and it was enacted, by a joint ordinance of both Houses of Parliament, "that the League and Covenant should be solemnly taken and subscribed, in all places throughout the kingdom of England and dominion of Wales, by all persons above the age of eighteen." Accordingly, it was signed by most of the members of the two houses of legislature, by all the *Divines* of the *Assembly* then sitting at Westminster, and by a large number of the people in general. Two of the principal vows were: 1. That the party taking and subscribing the Covenant would endeavor to "bring the Churches of God in all the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, and form of Church government, as the [Presbyterian] *Directory* prescribes for worship and catechising." And, 2. That he would "endeavor, without respect of persons, to extirpate popery and prelacy." (Geo. Smith, F.A.S., whose admirable history of England, in the times preceding Methodism, we follow.)

ment into pieces, and then burning the fragments in succession—he all the while lifting up his hands and eyes in pious indignation, until not a shred was left. After a futile (and on the part of the king and court an insincere) effort for a bill of Comprehension, giving to Protestant Non-conformists the same consideration that had been allowed to Romanists or papal Non-conformists in the ecclesiastical scheme of Elizabeth, the Restoration began to bring forth its fruit. The party in power, not satisfied with restoring the expelled bishops and ministers of the Church, proceeded to make direct aggression on the religious and civil liberties of those who differed from them.

The effects of these measures were dreadful. Great numbers were imprisoned; pious persons were driven to meet for worship in solitude and at midnight; and many sought deliverance from such tyranny by emigrating to the American Colonies. A host of conscientious ministers were driven from their churches, and as far as the power of the Crown could effect its object, all classes of Non-conformists were silenced. Men of great learning and religion were turned out of parsonage, glebes, and tithes, and then harried by laws that were a refinement of cruelty. And yet a pitiful picture might be drawn of the clergymen who, twenty years previously, had been expelled from the same churches by the Puritans, when men of learning and religion were in many instances succeeded by “mere rhapsodists and rambles,” “cried up as rare soul-saving preachers.” Not a few venerable and worthy ministers, then expelled by the rough hand of violence, “lingered out their lives, worried, and worn out with fears, anxieties, necessities, rude affronts, and remediless afflictions.” Such a marked retaliation as this had never before been known in the history of the Protestant Church. Hundreds of the men who lately protested against granting toleration were now compelled piteously, but in vain, to beg for liberty of conscience.

The Restoration removed even the appearance of morality. It opened wide the flood-gates of licentiousness and vice. The court became a royal brothel. The play-house became the temple of England. The king was a confirmed voluptuary, and is acknowledged to have been the father of at least eleven children born of seven different countesses, who lived successively with him as mistresses, although he had a queen the whole time who had to meet and mix up with these women at court. In all the relations

of life, public and private, he was unprincipled, profligate, false, and corrupt; whilst, from the example of his debauched and licentious court, public morals contracted a taint which it required little less than a century to obliterate, and which for a time paralyzed the character of the nation. For nearly a generation—during twenty-eight years—the people of England were in this state of religious retrogression. All the influences that were invested with power, and allowed freedom of action on the public mind, were malign in their tendency. Charles II. died (1685) begging forgiveness of his neglected queen, blessing his bastard children, asking for kindness to be shown to his mistresses, and receiving from a popish priest the Romish communion, extreme unction, and a popish pardon.

His brother, the Duke of York, an avowed papist, succeeded to the throne as James II. That he might bring in his own sort and place them in the universities and the courts and the churches, he presented the rare phenomenon of a Roman Catholic king contending for liberty of conscience for all his subjects! To this end he attempted—Stuart-like—to dispense with the laws of the realm by his royal prerogative. The perfidy and pig-headed obstinacy of James II., united with the judicial cruelties that disgraced his brief reign, led to his expulsion. The army, the navy, the Church, and the people, simultaneously abandoned the infatuated monarch, who, finding himself without any support, sought refuge in France.

William and Mary were, in consequence of the abdication of James, raised to the throne; but the nation did not on this occasion repeat the blunder which it had made on the restoration of the Stuarts. Before offering the Prince of Orange the scepter, both Houses waited on him and tendered a Declaration of Rights, which was accepted and became law. By this measure, constitutional liberty was secured; the succession to the throne became limited to Protestant princes; and other alterations of a liberal character followed.

In the year (1689) which followed the accession of William and Mary, an Act was passed which gave toleration to Protestant Dissenters. Yet their accession made another division in the English Church. Many ministers belonging to the High-church party, regarding the hereditary right to the throne as divine and indefeasible, refused to take the oath of allegiance to William,

and were consequently expelled from their offices and livings, under the name of Non-jurors. The Archbishop of Canterbury, four bishops, and about fourteen hundred clergymen, suffered deprivation for this cause. Anne ascended the throne at the death of William (1702). Her reign was distinguished by the military triumphs of Marlborough, and the brilliant wit and raillery of what has been commonly called the Augustan age of literature. George I., of Hanover, great-grandson of James I., succeeded (1714) on the death of Anne. He died of apoplexy, in 1727, whilst traveling with one of his mistresses, the Duchess of Kendal, to Hanover, and was succeeded by his son, George II.

These events placed the country in the civil, political, and religious position in which it was found at the origin of Methodism. Such influences crowded into the history of one hundred and fifty years must have had their effect on the moral character of a people, and should be taken into account in order to the formation of a just idea of the period when Wesley and his helpers began their work. Prelates and other ecclesiastical dignitaries were embroiled in political strife—intense partisans. The majority of the clergy were ignorant, worldly-minded, and many of them scandalized their profession by open immorality; and it may be said, without any breach of charity, that very few, even of the best of them, had correct views respecting the atoning sacrifice of Christ, or understood the nature of the great cardinal doctrine of the Reformation—justification by faith. Arianism and Socinianism, such as was taught by Clarke and Priestley, had become fashionable even among Dissenters. The higher classes laughed at piety, and prided themselves on being above what they called its fanaticism; the lower classes were grossly ignorant, and abandoned to vice.

From the Restoration down to the rise of Methodism, Churchmen and Non-conformists bear concurrent testimony respecting the decayed condition of religion and morals. The pathetic lamentation of Bishop Burnet has often been quoted. He says:

I am now in the seventieth year of my age; and as I cannot speak long in the world in any sort, so I cannot hope for a more solemn occasion than this of speaking with all due freedom, both to the present and to the succeeding ages. Therefore I lay hold on it, to give a free vent to those sad thoughts that lie on my mind both day and night, and are the subject of many secret mournings. I cannot look on without the deepest concern, when I see the imminent ruin hanging over this

Church, and, by consequence, over the whole Reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows; but that which heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen. I will, in examining this, confine myself to the clergy. Our Ember-weeks are the burden and grief of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers; I mean the plainest part of the Scriptures, which they say, in excuse for their ignorance, that their tutors in the universities never mention the reading of to them; so that they can give no account, or at least a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the Gospels. Those who have read some few books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account even of the Catechism itself, how short and plain soever. This does often tear my heart.

Burnet complains further of his clergy: "Politics and party eat out among us not only study and learning, but that which is the only thing that is more valuable—a true sense of religion."

Speaking on the subject, Macaulay says: "It is true that at that time (1685) there was no lack in the English Church of ministers distinguished by abilities and learning; but these men were to be found, with scarce a single exception, at the universities, at the great cathedrals, or in the capitol."

And a shrewd critic of the following century remarks on the effect of test-oaths and shifting majorities upon religious integrity: "The great numbers who went through a nominal conversion in order to secure an estate, or to enter a profession, gradually lowered the theological temperature. Sobriety and good sense were the qualities most valued in the pulpit, and enthusiasm and extravagance were those which were most dreaded. The habit of extempore preaching almost died out after Burnet. Tillotson set the example of written discourses, which harmonized better with the cold and colorless theology that prevailed."\*

Natural religion was the favorite study of the clergy—"the darling topic of the age." In the advertisement to his "Analogy Between Religion and the Constitution and Course of Nature," designed to meet the prevalent infidelity, Bishop Butler says:

It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much a subject of inquiry but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious; and, accordingly, they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals, for having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.

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\* Lecky: History of England in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. II., Chap. IX.



Archbishop Secker, but one year before that which is commemorated as the epoch of Methodism, observes:

Men have always complained of their own times, and always with too much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest which we feel ourselves, and therefore mistakes are easily made in comparing one age with another, yet in this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard for religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation; is daily spreading through every part of it; and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in all others after it. Indeed, it hath already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all.

Dr. Isaac Watts, in his preface to "An Humble Attempt Toward the Revival of Practical Religion" (1731), testifies of the religious declension: "It is a general matter of mournful observation amongst all that lay the cause of God to heart; and, therefore, it cannot be thought amiss for every one to use all just and proper efforts for *the recovery of dying religion in the world.*"

A late writer, not prejudiced in favor of Methodism, admits that when Wesley appeared the Anglican Church was "an ecclesiastical system under which the people of England had lapsed into heathenism, or a state hardly to be distinguished from it;" and that Methodism "preserved from extinction and reënimated the languishing Non-conformity of the last century, which, just at the time of the Methodistic revival, was rapidly in course to be found nowhere but in books."\*

"It was," to use Wesley's own words, "just at the time when we wanted little of filling up the measure of our iniquities, that two or three clergymen of the Church of England began vehemently to call sinners to repentance."

Voltaire did not speak without apparent reason when he predicted that Christianity would be overthrown throughout the world in the next generation. He was struck by the contrast between the English and French pulpits: "Discourses aiming at the pathetic and accompanied with violent gestures would excite laughter in an English congregation. A sermon in France is a long declamation, scrupulously divided into three parts, and

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\* Isaac Taylor: Wesley and Methodism.

delivered with enthusiasm. In England, a sermon is a solid but dry dissertation which a man reads to the people, without gesture and without any particular exaltation of the voice."

A historian of authority, often quoted, after declaring that "in the middle classes a religious revival burst forth," in the first half of the last century, "which changed after a time the whole tone of English society," adds:

But during the fifty years which preceded this outburst we see little save a revolt against religion and against Churches, in either the higher classes or the poor. Of the prominent statesmen of the time, the greater part were unbelievers in any form of Christianity, and distinguished for the grossness and immorality of their lives. Drunkenness and foul talk were thought no discredit to Walpole. A later prime-minister, the Duke of Grafton, was in the habit of appearing at the play with his mistress. Purity and fidelity to the marriage-vow were sneered out of fashion; and Lord Chesterfield, in his letters to his son, instructs him in the art of seduction as a part of a polite education.\*

The secular historians of this period, after their own manner and from their points of view, set the case in a strong light. Lecky, who will hardly be accused of "evangelical" principles, nor counted as a partisan of Methodism, testifies:

Yet cold, selfish, and unspiritual as was the religion of England from the Revolution till the Methodist movement had pervaded the Establishment with its spirit, it was a period that was not without its distinctive excellences.

There was little dogmatic exposition, and still less devotional literature, but the assaults of the deists were met with masterly ability. To this period belong the *Alciphron* of Berkeley, the *Analogy* of Butler, the *Credibility* of the Gospels by Lardner, and the *Evidential* writings of Sherlock, Leslie, and Leland. The clergy of the great cities were often skillful and masculine reasoners. Those of the country discharged the official duties of religion, mixing without scruple in country business and country sports. Their standard was low; their zeal was languid; but their influence, such as it was, was chiefly for good. That in such a society a movement like that of Methodism should have exercised a great power is not surprising. The secret of its success was merely that it satisfied some of the strongest and most enduring wants of our nature which found no gratification in the popular theology, and that it revived a large class of religious doctrines which had been long almost wholly neglected. The utter depravity of human nature, the lost condition of every man who is born into the world, the vicarious atonement of Christ, the necessity to salvation of a new birth, of faith, of the constant and sustaining action of the Divine Spirit upon the believer's soul, are doctrines which in the eyes of the modern Evangelicals constitute at once the most vital and the most influential portions of Christianity; but they are doctrines which, during the greater part of the eighteenth century, were seldom heard from a Church of England pulpit.

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\*Green: *History of the English People*, Vol. IV., Book VIII.

"The splendid victories by land and sea, and the dazzling episodes," in the reign of George II., "must yield," says Lecky, "in real importance to that religious revolution which shortly before had begun by the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield. The creation of a large, powerful, and active sect, extending over both hemispheres, and numbering many millions of souls, was but one of its consequences. It also exercised a profound and lasting influence upon the spirit of the Established Church, upon the amount and distribution of the moral forces of the nation, and even upon the course of its political history."

The same author thus describes the teaching of the pulpit "when the new movement began:"

The essential and predominating characteristics of the prevailing theology were the prominence that was given to external morality as distinguished both from dogma and from all the forms of emotion, and the assiduity with which the preachers labored to establish the purely rational character of Christianity. It was the leading object of the skeptics of the time to assert the sufficiency of natural religion. It was the leading object of a large proportion of the divines to prove that Christianity was little more than natural religion accredited by historic proofs and enforced by the indispensable sanctions of rewards and punishments. Beyond a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity and a general acknowledgment of the veracity of the Gospel narratives, they taught little that might not have been taught by disciples of Socrates and Plato. They labored to infuse a higher tone into the social and domestic spheres, to make men energetic in business, moderate in pleasure, charitable to the poor, upright, honorable, and dutiful in every relation of life. While acknowledging the imperfection, they sincerely respected the essential goodness of human nature, dwelt much upon the infallible authority of the moral sense, and explained away or simply neglected all doctrines that conflicted with it. A great variety of causes had led to the gradual evanescence of dogmatic teaching and to the discredit into which strong religious emotions had fallen.\*

At the risk of anticipating a portion of our history, the following remarks of this popular and philosophic historian on Pitt and Wesley are here presented for the light—direct and indirect—which they throw upon the subject:

Under the influence of many adverse circumstances, the standard of morals had been greatly depressed since the Restoration; and in the early Hanoverian period the nation had sunk into a condition of moral apathy rarely paralleled in history. But from about the middle of the eighteenth century a reforming spirit was once more abroad, and a steady movement of moral ascent may be detected. The influence of Pitt in politics and the influence of Wesley and his followers in religion were the earliest and most important agencies in effecting it. In most respects Pitt and Wesley were, it is true, extremely unlike. But with all these differ-

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\* History of England in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. II., Chap. IX.

ences, there was a real analogy and an intimate relation between the work of these two men. The religious and political notions prevailing in the early Hanoverian period were closely connected. The theological conception which looked upon religion as a kind of adjunct to the police-force, which dwelt almost exclusively on the prudence of embracing it, and on the advantages it could confer, and which regarded all spirituality and all strong emotions as fanaticism, corresponded very faithfully to that political system under which corruption was regarded as the natural instrument, and the maintenance of material interests the supreme end of government; while the higher motives of political action were systematically ridiculed and discouraged. By Wesley in the sphere of religion, by Pitt in the sphere of politics, the tone of thought and feeling was changed. It was felt that enthusiasm, disinterestedness, and self-sacrifice had their place in politics; and although there was afterward, for short periods, extreme corruption, public opinion never acquiesced in it again.\*

Green, in his "History of the English People,"† presents with equal clearness the fact that the Wesleyan revival was a necessary condition for purifying political life.

Horace Walpole, whose power ran through three reigns—from Anne to George II.—was the standing representative of political cynicism, of that unbelief in high sentiment and noble aspirations which had followed the crash of Puritanism. In the talk of patriotism and public virtue he saw nonsense. "Men would grow wiser," he said, "and come out of that." Bribery and borough-jobbing were his base of power. Green says:

Rant about ministerial corruption would have fallen flat on the public ear had not new moral forces, a new sense of social virtue, a new sense of religion, been stirring, however blindly, in the minds of Englishmen. The stir showed itself markedly in a religious revival which began in a small knot of Oxford students, whose revolt against the religious deadness of their times expressed itself in ascetic observances, an enthusiastic devotion, and a methodical regularity of life which gained them the nickname of "Methodists." Three figures detached themselves from the group as soon as, on its transfer to London, in 1738, it attracted public attention by the fervor and even extravagance of its piety; and each found his special work in the task to which the instinct of the new movement led it from the first—that of carrying religion and morality to the vast masses of population which lay concentrated in the towns, or around the mines and collieries of Cornwall and the north. Whitefield was, above all, the preacher of the revival. Speech was governing English politics; and the religious power of speech was shown when a dread of "enthusiasm" closed against the new apostles the pulpits of the Established Church and forced them to preach in the fields. Their voice was soon heard in the wildest and most barbarous corners of the land, in the dens of London, or in the long galleries where, in the pauses of his labor, the Cornish miner listens to the sobbing of the sea.

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\* *Ibid.*, Vol. II., Chap. VIII. † Vol. IV., Book VIII.

Such eulogies on Wesley and his co-laborers come late, but are none the less significant. They contrast gratefully with the scurrillous literature that greeted the Founder of Methodism when his work began. The test of Gamaliel has been applied: "But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it;" and historians announce the verdict of a century of facts.

We close the chapter with other quotations from this author who has studied Wesley and Wesleyanism: "He was older than any of his colleagues at the start, and he outlived them all. His life, indeed, almost covers the century. No man ever stood at the head of a great revolution whose temper was so anti-revolutionary. When Whitefield began his sermons in the fields, Wesley 'could not at first reconcile himself to that strange way.' He fought against the admission of laymen as preachers until he found himself left with none but laymen to preach. He broke with the Moravians who had been the earliest friends of the new movement, when they endangered its safe conduct by their contempt of religious forms. He broke with Whitefield when the great preacher plunged into an extravagant Calvinism. But the same practical temper of mind which led him to reject what was unmeasured, and to be the last to adopt what was new, enabled him at once to grasp and organize the novelties he adopted. He himself became the most unwearied of field-preachers, and his journal for half a century is little more than a record of fresh journeys and fresh sermons. When once driven to employ lay helpers in his ministry, he made their work a new and attractive feature in his system. The great body which he thus founded numbered one hundred thousand at his death, and now counts its members in England and America by millions. But the Methodists themselves were the least result of the Methodist revival. Its action upon the Church broke the lethargy of the clergy; and the 'Evangelical' movement, which found representatives like Newton and Cecil within the pale of the Establishment, made the fox-hunting parson and the absentee rector at last impossible. A new philanthropy reformed our prisons, infused clemency and wisdom into our penal laws, abolished the slave-trade, and gave the first impulse to popular education."

## CHAPTER III.

Home Training,—Parsonage Life—At School—At the University—Awakenings—Studying Divinity—Predestination—Difficulties About Assurance—Ordination.

LET us return to the Epworth parsonage. Samuel Wesley, the stalwart Churchman, is diligent; never unemployed, never triflingly employed.

Dr. Whitehead says of him: "As a pastor, Samuel Wesley was indefatigable in the duties of his office; a constant preacher, feeding the flock with the pure doctrines of the gospel, according to his ability; diligent in visiting the sick, and administering such advice as their situations required; and attentive to the conduct of all who were under his care; so that every one in his parish became an object of his concern. No strangers could settle within its limits but he presently knew it, and made himself acquainted with them."

He undertook to work the land of the rectory, but was a bad manager, and debts grew faster than crops. His barn fell, his flax got burned. The rector's temper, along with his Tory politics, made him unpopular; his cattle were stabbed in the field, his house-dog was maimed. Once his house was partially burned, and on another occasion was entirely destroyed by fire—whether by accident or incendiarism will never be known.

After a hotly-contested election, Mr. Wesley, for a debt of £30, was put into prison by an unfriendly creditor, where he remained three months, until friends who were able to help came to his relief. "Now I am at rest," he wrote from the prison to the Archbishop of York, "for I am come to the haven where I have long expected to be; and I don't despair of doing good here, and it may be more in this new parish than in my old one." He read prayers daily, and preached on Sundays. He was consoled by the fortitude of his noble wife. Money she had none—not a coin; the household lived on bread and milk, the produce of the Epworth glebe; but she did what she could to help her husband in his strait—she sent him her little articles of jewelry, including her wedding-ring; but these he sent her back, as things far

too sacred to be used in relieving his necessities. "'Tis not every one," he wrote again to the archbishop, "who could bear these things; but I bless God my wife is less concerned with suffering them than I am in writing, or than I believe your Grace will be in reading them. Most of my friends advise me to leave Epworth, if ever I should get from hence. I confess I am not of that mind, because I may yet do good here; and it is like a coward to desert my post because the enemy fire thick upon me."

Dr. A. Clarke assures us that Samuel Wesley had a large share of vivacity; that in conversation he was entertaining and instructive, having a rich fund of anecdote, and of witty and wise sayings. There is a grim humor in the way he tells of his debt troubles. His income was £200; but deducting taxes, poor assessments, sub-rents, tenths, procurations, and synodals, the Epworth living brought not more than about £130 a year. Writing to his patron, the archbishop (1701), he details these expenses, and adds:

I have had but three children born since I came hither about three years since, but another coming, and my wife incapable of any business in my family as she has been for almost a quarter of a year, yet we have but one maid-servant, to retrench all possible expenses. Ten pounds a year I allow my mother, to help to keep her from starving. All which together keeps me necessitous, especially since interest-money begins to pinch me, and I am always called on for money before I make it, and must buy every thing at the worst hand; whereas, could I be so happy as to get on the right side of my income, I should not fear, by God's help, but to live honestly in the world, and to leave a little to my children after me. I think, as 'tis, I could perhaps work it out in time, in half a dozen or half a score years, if my heart should hold so long; but for that, God's will be done!\*

Notwithstanding all these things, Samuel Wesley held on his way. Leaving the care of household and the education of children to his excellent wife, he not only discharged his clerical duties with diligence, but, unchecked by poverty or persecution,

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\* A few days after, another letter followed to the archbishop: "This comes as a rider to the last, by the same post, to bring such news as I presume will not be unwelcome to a person who has so particular a concern for me. Last night my wife brought me a *few* children. There are but *two* yet, a boy and a girl, and I think they are all at present. Wednesday evening my wife and I clubbed and joined stocks, which came but to *six shillings*, to send for coals Thursday morning I received the *ten pounds*, and at night my wife was delivered Glory be to God for his unspeakable goodness!"

persevered in a course of literary labor of vast magnitude. Besides a great number of smaller but respectable publications, he dedicated his "Life of Christ," in verse, to Queen Mary; his "History of the Old and New Testaments" to Queen Anne; and his elaborate Latin dissertations on the Book of Job to Queen Caroline—three successive queens of Great Britain. His greatest literary work was "Dissertationes in Librum Jobi," a large-size folio book of six hundred pages. He was employed upon this remarkable production for more than five and twenty years, and death found him plodding away at the unfinished task. It is written in Latin, intermixed with innumerable Hebrew and Greek quotations. The list of subscribers for it includes the first characters in the realm—princes, prelates, poets, and philosophers. Pope was intimate with the rector, and in a letter to Swift, soliciting his interest for the book, says of its author: "I call him what he is, a learned man, and I engage you will approve his prose more than you formerly did his poetry." The illustrations, or "sculptures," were numerous, unique, and costly. While the author was giving minute directions about engraving Job's war-horse and the "Poetica Descriptio Monstri," the wolf was at his door. The rectory had been rebuilt within a year after it was burned; but the rector was so impoverished that thirteen years afterward his wife declares that the house was still not half furnished, and she and her children had not more than half enough of clothing. This extract from one of her letters tells its own story: "The late Archbishop of York once said to me (when my master was in Lincoln castle), 'Tell me, Mrs. Wesley, whether you ever really wanted bread?' 'My lord,' said I, 'I will freely own to your Grace that, strictly speaking, I never did want bread. But then I had so much care to get it before it was eat, and to pay for it after, as has often made it very unpleasant to me; and I think to have bread on such terms is the next degree of wretchedness to having none at all.'"

The mother of nineteen children, ten of whom were reared to maturity, the wife of a poor clergyman, Mrs. Wesley was placed in circumstances sufficiently trying to call forth all the resources of the greatest and most cultivated Christian mind. And it is not saying too much to add that her resources never failed her. She conducted household affairs with judgment, precision, diligence, and economy. Her children found in her a devoted, talented,



and systematic teacher. When rising into life, her sons as well as daughters had in their mother an able and affectionate counselor, correspondent, and friend. Her most distinguished son, in later years, mentions "the calm serenity with which his mother transacted business, wrote letters, and conversed, surrounded by her thirteen children." She was a woman that lived by rule; she methodized every thing so exactly that to each operation she had a time, and time sufficient to transact all the business of the family. As to the children, their going to rest, rising in the morning, dressing, eating, learning, and exercise, she managed by rule, which was never suffered to be broken unless in case of sickness.

It was not until after her children had reached mature years that the system by which she managed her household was committed to writing. These are some of the principal rules which she says, "I observed in educating my family: "

The children were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable of, from their birth; as in dressing and undressing, changing their linen, etc. When turned a year old (and some before) they were taught to fear the rod and to cry softly, by which means they escaped abundance of correction which they might otherwise have had; and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house, but the family usually lived in as much quietness as if there had not been a child among them.

As soon as they were grown pretty strong, they were confined to three meals a day. At dinner their little table and chairs were set by ours, where they could be overlooked; and as soon as they could handle a knife and fork they were set to our table. They were never suffered to choose their meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family.

At six, as soon as family prayer was over, they had their supper; at seven the maid washed them, and, beginning at the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight, at which time she left them in their several rooms awake, for there was no such thing allowed of in our house as sitting by a child till it fell asleep.

In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will and bring them to an obedient temper. To inform the understanding is a work of time, and must with children proceed by slow degrees, as they are able to bear it; but the subjecting the will is a thing which must be done at once, and the sooner the better, for by neglecting timely correction they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which are hardly ever after conquered, and never without using such severity as would be as painful to me as to the child. In the esteem of the world they pass for kind and indulgent whom I call cruel parents, who permit their children to get habits which they know must be afterward broken. Nay, some are so stupidly fond as in sport to teach their children to do things which in awhile after they have severely beaten them for doing. When

a child is corrected it must be conquered; and this will be no hard matter to do if it be not grown headstrong by too much indulgence. And when the will of a child is totally subdued, and it is taught to revere and stand in awe of the parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertences may be passed by. I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.

Our children were taught, as soon as they could speak, the Lord's Prayer, which they were made to say at rising and bed-time constantly, to which as they grew bigger were added a short prayer for their parents, and some collects, a short catechism, and some portion of Scripture, as their memories could bear. They were very early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days, before they could well speak or go. They were as soon taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing immediately after, which they used to do by signs before they could kneel or speak.

They were quickly made to understand they might have nothing they cried for. They were not suffered to ask even the lowest servant for aught without saying, 'Pray give me such a thing;' and the servant was chid if she ever let them omit that word.

Taking God's name in vain, cursing and swearing, profanity, obscenity, rude, ill-bred names, were never heard among them; nor were they ever permitted to call each other by their proper names without the addition of brother or sister.

There was no such thing as loud talking or playing allowed of, but every one was kept close to business for the six hours of school. And it is almost incredible what a child may be taught in a quarter of a year by a vigorous application, if it have but a tolerable capacity and good health. Kezzy excepted, all could read better in that time than the most of women can do as long as they live.

For some years we went on very well. Never were children in better order. Never were children better disposed to piety, or in more subjection to their parents, till that fatal dispersion of them after the fire into several families. In those they were left at full liberty to converse with servants, which before they had always been restrained from, and to run abroad to play with any children, good or bad. They soon learned to neglect a strict observance of the Sabbath, and got knowledge of several songs and bad things which before they had no notion of. That civil behavior which made them admired when they were at home by all who saw them was in a great measure lost, and a clownish accent and many rude ways were learnt, which were not reformed without some difficulty.

When the house was rebuilt, and the children all brought home, we entered on a strict reform; and then was begun the custom of singing psalms at beginning and leaving school, morning and evening. Then also that of a general retirement at five o'clock was entered upon, when the oldest took the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom they read the psalms for the day and a chapter in the New Testament—as in the morning they were directed to read the psalms and a chapter in the Old Testament, after which they went to their private prayers, before they got their breakfast or came into the family.

There were several by-laws observed among us.

First. It had been observed that cowardice and fear of punishment often lead children into lying, till they get a custom of it which they cannot leave. To prevent this, a law was made that whoever was charged with a fault of which they were guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it and promise to amend, should not be beaten. This rule prevented a great deal of lying.

Second. That no *sinful* action, as lying, pilfering, disobedience, quarreling, etc., should ever pass unpunished.

Third. That no child should be ever chid or beat twice for the same fault, and that if they amended they should never be upbraided with it afterward.

Fourth. That every signal act of obedience, especially when it crossed upon their own inclinations, should be always commended.

Fifth. That if ever any child performed an act of obedience, or did any thing with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted and the child with sweetness directed how to do better for the future.

Sixth. That propriety be inviolably preserved, and none suffered to invade the property of another in the smallest matter, though it were but of the value of a farthing, or a pin, which they might not take from the owner without, much less against, his consent. This rule can never be too much inculcated on the minds of children; and from the want of parents or governors doing it as they ought proceeds that shameful neglect of justice which we may observe in the world.

The day before a child began to study, the house was set in order, every one's work appointed, and a charge given that none should come into the room from nine till twelve, or from two till five, which were the school-hours. One day was allowed the pupil to learn his letters, and each of them did in that time know them all except two, who were a day and a half at the task, "for which," she says, "I then thought them very dull." Samuel, who was the first child thus taught, learned the alphabet in a few hours. The day after he was five years old he began to study, and as soon as he knew the letters he proceeded to spell out the first chapter of Genesis. The same method was observed by them all.\*

Book-knowledge was only a part of the course of education embraced by Mrs. Wesley's system. She knew that for the truths of the gospel to find a lodgment in the heart they must be personally and directly applied. For this purpose she ar-

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\*Samuel, the eldest son, was born whilst Mr. Wesley was a curate in London, five other children—all daughters—of whom three died, were born at South Ormsby; and afterward thirteen more were born at Epworth. Of the whole, three boys, Samuel, John, and Charles; and seven girls, Emilia, Susanna, Mary, Mehetabel, Anne, Martha, and Keziah, reached maturity, and were all married, except the last.

ranged a special private conference with each child once in every week. Her own account of this plan is thus expressed: "I take such a portion of time as I can best spare every night to discourse with each child by itself on something that relates to its principal concerns. On Monday I talk with Molly, on Tuesday with Hetty, Wednesday with Nancy, Thursday with Jacky, Friday with Patty, Saturday with Charles, and with Emilia and Sukey together on Sunday" These conversations disclosed to the mother the real thoughts and feelings of her children respecting personal religion.\*

Nearly twenty years afterward, John Wesley, at Oxford, was, by correspondence, inquiring for direction from his mother on the subject of a complete renunciation of the world. Urging his claim for just a little time to be given by her to this point, he says in his letter: "In many things you have interceded for me and prevailed. Who knows but in this too you may be successful? If you can spare me only that little part of Thursday evening which you formerly bestowed upon me in another manner, I doubt not it would be as useful now for correcting my heart as it was then for forming my judgment."

On three several occasions, Samuel Wesley was elected proctor, or convocation man, for the diocese of Lincoln. These attendances at convocation brought upon him an expenditure of £150, which he could ill afford to bear. Being so much in London, he required a curate to supply his place at Epworth. On one occasion, when Wesley returned from London, the parishioners complained that the curate had "preached nothing to his congregation except the duty of paying their debts and behaving well among their neighbors." The complainants added: "We think, sir, there is more in religion than this." The rector replied: "There certainly is; I will hear him myself." The curate was sent for, and was told that he must preach next Lord's-day, the rector at the same time saying: "I suppose you can prepare a sermon upon any text I give you." "Yes, sir," replied the ready curate. "Then," said Wesley, "prepare a sermon on Hebrews xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.'" The time arrived, and the text being read with great solemnity, the curate began his brief sermon, by saying: "Friends, faith is a most excellent virtue, and it produces other virtues also. In par-

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\*Stevenson's Memorials of the Wesley Family.

ticular, it makes a man pay his debts;" and thus he fell into the worn rut and kept on to the end.

It is not likely that the ministry of such a man would satisfy the enlightened mind and religious heart of Susanna Wesley; nor is it to be wondered at that she should try to supply its defects by reading to her children and to her neighbors, on Sunday evenings, the best sermons to be found in her husband's library. The congregations of the rector's wife were probably larger than those of the rector's curate. Inman heard of these gatherings, and wrote the rector, complaining that Mrs. Wesley, in his absence, had turned the parsonage into a conventicle; that the Church was likely to be scandalized by such irregular proceedings, and that they ought not to be tolerated. Mr. Wesley wrote to his wife; and an extract from her reply gives us a hint of his objections and a history of her irregular way of doing good:

I heartily thank you for dealing so plainly and faithfully with me in a matter of no common concern. The main of your objections against our Sunday evening meetings are, first, that it will look particular; secondly, my sex.

As to its looking particular, I grant it does; and so does almost every thing that is serious, or that may any way advance the glory of God or the salvation of souls, if it be performed out of a pulpit, or in the way of common conversation; because in our corrupt age the utmost care and diligence have been used to banish all discourse of God or spiritual concerns out of society, as if religion were never to appear out of the closet, and we were to be ashamed of nothing so much as of professing ourselves to be Christians. To your second, I reply that as I am a woman so I am also mistress of a large family. And though the superior charge of the souls contained in it lies upon you, as head of the family, and as their minister, yet in your absence I cannot but look upon every soul you leave in my care as a talent committed to me, under a trust, by the great Lord of all the families of heaven and earth. I thought it my duty to spend some part of the day in reading to and instructing my family, especially in your absence, when, having no afternoon service, we have so much leisure for such exercises; and such time I esteem spent in a way more acceptable to God than if I had retired to my own private devotions. This was the beginning of my present practice; other people coming in and joining with us was purely accidental. Our lad told his parents—they first desired to be admitted; then others who heard of it begged leave also. I chose the best and most awakening sermons we had. Last Sunday, I believe, we had above two hundred hearers, and yet many went away for want of room. We banish all temporal concerns from our society; none is suffered to mingle any discourse about them with our reading and singing. We keep close to the business of the day, and as soon as it is over they all go home. And where is the harm of this? As for your proposal of letting some other person read, alas! you do not consider what a people these are. I do not think one man among them could read a sermon without spelling a good part of it; and how would that edify the rest? . If you

do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you *desire* me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience; but send me your *positive command*, in such full and express terms as may absolve me from all guilt and punishment, for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It has been well remarked that when, in this characteristic letter, she said, "Do not tell me that you desire me to do it, but send me your positive command," Susanna Wesley was bringing to its place a corner-stone of the future Methodism. John and Charles Wesley were present at these irregular meetings—the first Methodist meetings ever held—Charles a child of four years old, and John a boy of nine.

On February 9, 1709, at midnight, when all the family were in bed, Samuel Wesley was startled by a cry of fire, out-of-doors. His wife and her eldest daughters rose as quickly as possible. He then burst open the nursery door, where in two beds were sleeping five of his children and their nurse. The nurse seized Charles, the youngest, and bid the others follow. Three of the children did as they were bidden; but John (six years old) was left sleeping. The wind drove the flames inward with such violence that egress seemed impossible. Some of the children now escaped through the windows, and the rest through a little door into the garden. Mrs. Wesley was not in a condition either to climb to the windows or get to the garden door; and, ill clad as she was, she was compelled to force her way to the main entrance through the fury of the flames, which she did, suffering no further harm than scorching.

When Mr. Wesley was counting heads to see if all his family were safe, he heard a cry issuing from the nursery, and found that John was wanting. He attempted to ascend the stairs, but they were all on fire, and were insufficient to bear his weight. Finding it impossible to render help, he knelt down and commended the soul of his child to God. Meanwhile the child had mounted a chest which stood near the window, and a person in the yard saw him, and proposed running to fetch a ladder. Another seeing there was no time for that, proposed to fix himself against the wall, and that a lighter man should be set upon his shoulders. This was done—the child was pulled through the window; and, at the same instant, the roof fell with a fearful crash, but fortunately fell inward, and thus the two men and the rescued child were saved from perishing. When the child

was taken to an adjoining house, the devout rector cried: "Come, neighbors, let us kneel down; let us give thanks to God; he has given me all my eight children; let the house go; I am rich enough." The memory of his deliverance, on this occasion, is preserved in one of John's early portraits, which has below the head the representation of a house in flames, with the motto, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?"\*

The rector writes: "When poor Jackey was saved, I could not believe it till I had kissed him two or three times. My wife asked, 'Are your books safe?' I told her it was not much, now she and the rest were preserved alive. Mr. Smith, of Gainsborough, and others, have sent for some of my children. I had finished my alterations in the 'Life of Christ' a little while since, and transcribed three copies of it; but all is lost. God be praised! I hope my wife will recover and not miscarry, but God will give me my nineteenth child. When I came to her her lips were black. I did not know her. Some of the children are a little burned, but not hurt or disfigured. I only got a small blister on my hand. The neighbors send us clothes, for it is cold without them."

Mr. and Mrs. Wesley, aware of their inability to lay up fortunes for their children, resolved that they should enjoy the advantages of education. The daughters were well instructed by their mother; and their three sons were all graduates of the University of Oxford. Samuel Wesley, junior, was educated at Westminster School; and in 1711 was elected to Christchurch, Oxford, where he took his degree. He was eminent for his learning, and was an excellent poet, with great power of satire, and

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\* Because of this narrow escape, his mother's mind appears to have been drawn out with unusual earnestness in concern for John. One of her written meditations, when he was eight years old, shows how much her heart was engaged in forming his mind for religion. This is the meditation: "Evening, May 17th, 1711. Son *John*. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his mercies? The little unworthy praise that I can offer is so mean and contemptible an offering that I am even ashamed to tender it. But, Lord, accept it for the sake of Christ, and pardon the deficiency of the sacrifice. I would offer thee myself, and all that thou hast given me; and I would resolve—O give me grace to do it!—that the residue of my life shall be devoted to thy service. And I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been; that I may do my endeavor to instill into his mind the principles of thy true religion, and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success!"

an elegant wit. He held a considerable rank among the literary men of the day.\*

As a High-churchman, he greatly disapproved of the conduct of his brothers when they began to itinerate. He also objected to the doctrines they preached. Probably the last letter written by his trenchant pen was in reply to one sent him from Bristol by his brother, dated May 10th, 1739, in which he gives instances of instantaneous conversion resulting from his preaching in that city. Doubting Samuel wrote to John: "I must ask a few more questions. Did these agitations ever begin during the use of any collects of the Church, or during the preaching of any sermon that had been preached within consecrated walls without that effect, or during the inculcating any other doctrine besides that of your new birth?"

Charles was sent to Westminster School in the year 1716, being then eight years of age. John had then been about two years at the Charterhouse School in London. At Westminster, Charles was placed under the care of his brother Samuel, who was one of the ushers in that establishment, and, for a time, bore the expense of Charles's maintenance and education. Samuel made him an excellent classical scholar and a "Churchman."

When John was at the Charterhouse, the elder boys were accustomed, in addition to their other tyranny, to take the portions of animal food provided for the younger scholars. In consequence of this he was limited for a considerable time to a small daily portion of bread as his only solid food. There was one thing, however, which contributed to his general flow of health, and to the establishment of his constitution; and that was his invariable attention to a strict command of his father that he should run round the Charterhouse garden, which was of considerable extent, three times every morning.

From early childhood he was remarkable for his sober and studious disposition, and seemed to feel himself answerable to his reason and conscience for every thing he did. Such was his consistency of conduct that his father admitted him to the com-

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\* In 1736 he published a quarto volume of poetry. Among these pieces we have a paraphrase on Isaiah xl. 6-8, occasioned by the death of a young lady, and which is found in the hymn-books, beginning, "The morning flowers display their sweets." He was also the author of, "The Lord of Sabbath let us praise;" "Hail, God the Son, in glory crown'd;" "Hail, Holy Ghost, Jehovah, third;" "The Sun of righteousness appears," etc.



munion-table when he was only eight years old. Between the age of eight and nine the small-pox attacked him. At the time his father was in London, and his mother writing him remarks: "Jack has borne his disease bravely, like a man, and indeed like a Christian, without complaint." The great privilege of being a Charterhouse scholar he owed to a nobleman's friendship for his father. There he remained six years, making such progress that in 1720 he was elected on this foundation to Christchurch, Oxford, one of the noblest colleges in that illustrious seat of learning; and here he continued until after his ordination in 1725. In reference to this period he writes: "I still said my prayers, both in public and private, and read with the Scriptures several other books of religion, especially comments on the New Testament. Yet I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness; nay, went on habitually and, for the most part, very contentedly in some or other known sin--though with some intermission and short struggles, especially before and after the holy communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year."

He often struggled with financial difficulty, and more than once, when requesting his sisters to write to him, playfully remarks that though he was "so poor," he "would be able to spare the postage for a letter now and then." The £40 per annum which belonged to him as a Charterhouse scholar was barely sufficient to meet all the expenses of a young Oxford student of that day. His financial embarrassments are often and painfully referred to in the family correspondence.

From the age of eleven to twenty-one, John Wesley's religious experience seems to have suffered much loss. He was now the gay and sprightly young man, with a turn for wit and humor. He had already begun to amuse himself occasionally with writing verses, some in a vein of trifling elegance, others either imitations or translations of the Latin. Once, however, he wrote an imitation of the sixty-fifth Psalm, which he sent to his father, who said: "I like your verses on the sixty-fifth Psalm, and would not have you bury your talent."

Of his steadfastness in orthodox views there can be no doubt. Infidelity was all abroad, even in his college; but it seems not to have touched him. Occasionally the leaven of Pharisaism wrought in him, but he had in him nothing of the vulgar, materialistic Sadducee. His faculty of belief was sound and soundly

exercised Conscience, however tender, was never allowed to intrude into the office of judgment. The patience and fairness with which he inquired into, and reported, many things made the impression on some that he believed them all.\*

There is no evidence that when John Wesley went to Oxford he intended to become a minister of the Established Church. He might intend to devote himself, like his brother Samuel, to tutorship; or he might contemplate some other mode of maintenance. Certain it is that it was not until about the beginning of 1725, when he had been more than four years at college, that he seems to have been seriously exercised on the subject. The thought of obtaining ordination gave an abrupt turn to his stud-

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\*The ghost-story has entered into all Wesleyan biographies. It was during John's residence at the Charterhouse that mysterious noises were heard in Epworth rectory. The often told story need not be repeated; but there can be no question that the Charterhouse youth was impressed. He took the trouble of obtaining minute particulars from his mother, and his four sisters, and others, competent witnesses. The learned Priestley obtained the family letters and journals relating to these curious facts, and gave them to the world as the best authenticated and best told story of the kind extant. They call to mind things described by Cotton Mather, in the witchcraft of New England. Sometimes moans were heard, as from a person dying; at others, it swept through the halls and along the stairs, with the sound of a person trailing a loose gown on the floor; the chamber walls, meanwhile, shook with vibrations. Before "Jeffrey" (as the children called it) came into any room, the latches were frequently lifted up, and the windows clattered. It seemed to clap the doors, draw the curtains, and throw the man-servant's shoes up and down. Once it threw open the nursery door. The mastiff barked violently at it the first day, yet whenever it came afterward he ran off whining, to shelter himself. These noises continued about two months, and occurred, the latter part of the time, every day. The family soon came to consider them amusing freaks, as they were never attended with any serious harm; they all, nevertheless, deemed them preternatural. Adam Clarke believed them to be demoniacal. It was evidently, says Southey, a Jacobite goblin, and seldom suffered Mr. Wesley to pray for the Hanover king without disturbing the family. John says it gave "thundering knocks" at the Amen, and the loyal rector, waxing angry at the insult, sometimes repeated the prayer with defiance. Priestley supposed them a trick of the servants. Isaac Taylor thinks that the strange Epworth episode so laid open Wesley's faculty of belief that ever after a right-of-way for the supernatural was opened through his mind to the end of life. Southey argues that such occurrences have a tendency to explode the fine-spun theories of materialists who deny another state of being, and to bring men to the conclusion that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy. Tyerman says: "We have little doubt that the Epworth noises deepened and most powerfully increased Wesley's convictions of the existence of an unseen world, and in this way, exercised an important influence on the whole of his future life."

ies and his manner of life. He consulted his parents, and both gave characteristic advice. His father, beginning thus, "As to what you mention of entering into holy orders, it is indeed a great work, and I am pleased to find you think it so," hints that in his judgment it was rather too early for his son to take that solemn obligation on him, and advises that he perfect himself in Hebrew, etc. His mother urges her son "to greater application in the study of *practical* divinity, which, of all other studies, I humbly conceive to be the best for candidates for orders," and concludes by saying that she had noticed of late an alteration in his temper, and trusted that it might proceed from the operations of the Holy Ghost. She exhorts him:

And now, in good earnest, resolve to make religion the business of your life; for, after all, that is the one thing which, strictly speaking, is necessary; all things beside are comparatively little to the purposes of life. I heartily wish you would now enter upon a strict examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. If you have, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains; if you have not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in a tragedy.

This excellent advice was not lost upon him; and, indeed, his mother's admirable letters were among the principal means, under God, of producing that still more decided change in his views which soon afterward began to display itself. The young scholar threw his whole strength into his work, and devoted himself with intense diligence to the study of practical divinity, giving special attention to those books which were likely to guide him to a sound judgment in spiritual matters, and to lead his affections toward God. With this view he carefully studied Thomas à Kempis on "The Imitation of Christ," Bishop Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living and Dying," and William Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life." From these impressive books he learned that true religion does not consist in orthodox opinions, nor in correct moral conduct, nor in conformity to the purest modes of worship, necessary as these things are in their place: but in the possession and exercise of the mind that was in Christ. He was anxious, beyond expression, to attain inward and outward holiness as the great end of his being. Wesley writes:

I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions. I was, however, angry at Kempis for being too strict; though I read him only in Dean Stanhope's translation. Yet I had frequently much sensible comfort in reading him, such as I was

an utter stranger to before. Meeting likewise with a religious friend, which I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and to pray for, inward holiness. So that now, doing so much and living so good a life, I doubted not that I was a good Christian.

In reference to Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," he observes:

In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected; that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God—all my thoughts, and words, and actions—being thoroughly convinced there was no medium; but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself—that is, in effect, the devil.

But some of Taylor's opinions provoked the dissent of the devout student, and led him more definitely to doctrines which were to be vital in the theology of Methodism. The Bishop, in common with most theologians of his day, denied that the Christian could usually know his acceptance with God. Wesley replied: "If we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us (which he will not do unless we are regenerate), certainly we must be sensible of it. If we can never have any certainty of our being in a state of salvation, good reason it is that every moment should be spent, not in joy, but in fear and trembling; and then, undoubtedly, in this life we are of all men most miserable."

He is feeling after the doctrine of assurance. His mother, to whom his difficulties were stated, omits to afford him any assistance on the point of the possibility of obtaining a comfortable persuasion of being in a state of salvation, through the influence of the Holy Spirit; which he supposed to be the privilege of a real believer, though as yet he was greatly perplexed as to the means of attaining it. She says:

I do n't well understand what he [Taylor] means by saying, "Whether God has forgiven us or no, we know not." If he intends such a certainty of pardon as cannot possibly admit of the least doubt or scruple, he is infallibly in the right; for such an absolute certainty we can never have till we come to heaven. But if he means no more than that reasonable persuasion of the forgiveness of sins, which a true penitent feels when he reflects on the evidences of his own sincerity, he is certainly in the wrong, for such a firm persuasion is actually enjoyed by a man in this life. The virtues which we have by the grace of God acquired are not of so little force as he supposes; for we may surely perceive when we have them in any good degree.

Mother and son had not yet distinguished between the witness of our own spirit and the witness of the Spirit itself. In his re-

ply he makes the important distinction between assurance of present and assurance of future salvation; by confounding which, so many, from their objection to the Calvinistic notion of the infallible perseverance of the saints, have given up the doctrine of assurance altogether:

That we can never be so certain of the pardon of our sins as to be assured they will never rise up against us, I firmly believe. We know that they will infallibly do so if ever we apostatize; and I am not satisfied what evidence there can be of our final perseverance till we have finished our course. But I am persuaded we may know if we are now in a state of salvation, since that is expressly promised in the Holy Scriptures to our sincere endeavors; and we are surely able to judge of our own sincerity.

The latter part of this extract will, however, show how much he had yet to learn in Methodist theology.

On the witness of the Spirit he is not so clear as he is in his dissent from the tenet of "final perseverance." The time approaches for ordination, and he is naturally exercised over the article on predestination. He wrote:

As I understand faith to be an assent to any truth upon rational grounds, I do not think it possible, without perjury, to swear I believe any thing unless I have reasonable grounds for my persuasion. Now, that which contradicts reason cannot be said to stand upon reasonable grounds; and such, undoubtedly, is every proposition which is incompatible with the divine justice or mercy. What, then, shall I say of predestination? If it was inevitably decreed from eternity that a determinate part of mankind should be saved, and none besides, then a vast majority of the world were only born to eternal death, without so much as a possibility of avoiding it. How is this consistent with either divine justice or mercy? Is it merciful to ordain a creature to everlasting misery? Is it just to punish a man for crimes which he could not but commit? That God should be the author of sin and injustice, which must, I think, be the consequence of maintaining this opinion, is a contradiction to the clearest ideas we have of the divine nature and perfections.

His mother confirmed him in these views, and expressed her abhorrence of the Calvinistic theology. Meanwhile she tried to solve some of his scruples respecting the article on predestination; and wrote him a long letter, from which we give the following extracts:

Such studies tend more to confound than to inform the understanding, and young people had better let them alone. But since I find you have some scruples concerning our article, Of Predestination, I will tell you my thoughts of the matter. If they satisfy not, you may desire your father's direction, who is surely better qualified for a casuist than I.

The doctrine of predestination, as maintained by the rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought to be abhorred, because it directly charges the Most High God with being the author of sin. I think you reason well and justly against it; for it

is certainly inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God to lay any man under either a physical or moral necessity of committing sin, and then to punish him for doing it. I firmly believe that God, from eternity, has elected some to eternal life; but then I humbly conceive that this election is founded on his foreknowledge, according to Romans viii. 29, 30. Whom, in his eternal prescience, God saw would make a right use of their powers, and accept of offered mercy, he did predestinate and adopt for his children. And that they may be conformed to the image of his only Son, he calls them to himself, through the preaching of the gospel, and, internally by his Holy Spirit; which call they obeying, repenting of their sins and believing in the Lord Jesus, he justifies them, absolves them from the guilt of all their sins, and acknowledges them as just and righteous persons, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. And having thus justified, he receives them to glory—to heaven.

This is the sum of what I believe concerning predestination, which I think is agreeable to the analogy of faith; since it does in nowise derogate from the glory of God's free grace, nor impair the liberty of man. Nor can it with more reason be supposed that the prescience of God is the cause that so many finally perish than that our knowing the sun will rise to-morrow is the cause of its rising.

John Wesley substantially adopted these predestinarian views, as may be seen in his sermon on the text expounded in the foregoing letter; but his notions of that faith by which a sinner is justified were, at present, far from being clear.

The time for his ordination was now at hand, and the money question required attention. His father writes: "I will assist you in the charges for ordination, though I am myself just now struggling for life. The £8 you may depend on this next week, or the week after." And John Wesley was ordained deacon, September 19, 1725.

[The materials of this Chapter are drawn chiefly from Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*; Stevens's *History of Methodism*; and Tyerman's *Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*]

## CHAPTER IV

The Fellowship—His Father's Curate—Cutting Off Acquaintances—Charles Awakened—The Holy Club—Whitefield and Other Members—Original Methodists—What Lack I Yet?

SIX months after his ordination, one of the fellowships of Lincoln College being vacant, Wesley became a candidate for it. His previous seriousness had been the subject of much banter and ridicule, and appears to have been urged against him in the election by his opponents; but his reputation for learning and diligence, and the excellence of his character, triumphed. Here again money was wanted to bear the expenses of installation, and the father, as usual, strained himself to help. The academic distinction achieved was most gratifying to the family, and the substantial income attached to the fellowship put an end to his wants. Wesley hereafter could maintain himself comfortably, and help others also. Henceforth, he said, he "was entirely free from worldly cares, for his income was ready for him on stated days, and all he had to do was to count it and carry it home." His mother, with a full heart, thanked Almighty God for his "good success;" and his exultant father wrote:

DEAR MR. FELLOW ELECT OF LINCOLN: I have done more than I could for you. The last £12 pinched me so hard that I am forced to beg time of your brother Sam till after harvest, to pay him the £10 that you say he lent you. Nor shall I have as much as that, perhaps not £5, to keep my family till after harvest; and I do not expect that I shall be able to do any thing for Charles when he goes to the university. What will be my own fate God only knows. *Sed passi graviora.* Wherever I am, my Jack is fellow of Lincoln.

His literary character was now established at the university. All parties acknowledged him to be a man of talents and of learning; while his skill in logic was known to be remarkable. The result was that though he was only in the twenty-third year of his age, he was, in November following, elected Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes.

Wesley, about this period, undertook to rid himself of unprofitable acquaintances. He writes:

When it pleased God to give me a settled resolution to be not a *nominal* but a *real* Christian (being then about twenty-two years of age), my acquaint-

ance were as ignorant of God as myself. But there was this difference—I knew my own ignorance; they did not know theirs. I faintly endeavored to help them, but in vain. Meantime I found, by sad experience, that even their *harmless* conversation, so called, damped all my good resolutions. I saw no possible way of getting rid of them unless it should please God to remove me to another college. He did so, in a manner utterly contrary to all human probability. I was elected fellow of a college [Lincoln] where I knew not one person. I foresaw abundance of people would come to see me, either out of friendship, civility, or curiosity; and that I should have offers of acquaintance new and old; but I had now fixed my plan. I resolved to have no acquaintance by chance, but by choice; and to choose such only as would help me on my way to heaven. In consequence of this, I narrowly observed the temper and behavior of all that visited me. I saw no reason to think that the greater part of these truly loved or feared God; therefore, when any of them came to see me, I behaved as courteously as I could; but to the question, “When will you come to see me?” I returned no answer. When they had come a few times, and found I still declined returning the visit, I saw them no more. And I bless God this has been my invariable rule for about three-score years. I knew many reflections would follow, but that did not move me, as I knew full well it was my calling to go through evil report and good report.

He laid down a severe and systematic course of study, took pupils, wrote sermons, kept fast-days, and was much in prayer. The rector of Epworth became less able than formerly to attend to the duties of his parish, and earnestly desired his son John to assist him as his curate. He complied with his father’s wishes, and left Oxford for this purpose in August, 1727; and only for priest’s orders and Master’s degree did he visit Oxford during the next two years. He labored diligently.

What were the results? Wesley himself shall tell us: “I preached much, but saw no fruit of my labor. Indeed, it could not be that I should; for I neither laid the foundation of repentance nor of believing the gospel; taking it for granted that all to whom I preached were believers, and that many of them needed no repentance.” Meanwhile Charles, five years his junior, had been elected to Christchurch College, and entered it about the time John left it. For some months after his arrival in Oxford, though very agreeable in his spirit and manners, he was far from being earnest in his application to study; the strict authority over him which his brother Samuel exercised, as his tutor and guardian, being now withdrawn. He says: “My first year at college I lost in diversions; the next I set myself to study.” “He pursued his studies diligently,” says John, “and led a regular, harmless life; but if I spoke to him about religion, he would



warmly answer, 'What, would you have me to be a saint all at once?' and would hear no more."\*

Such was the state of the two brothers when John left Oxford to become his father's curate. But soon after that event, and apparently without the intervention of any particular means, Charles Wesley also became deeply serious, and earnestly desired to be a spiritual worshiper of God. Believing that the keeping of a diary would further his designs, and knowing that his brother had kept such a record for some years, he wrote to him, requesting his advice:

I would willingly write a diary of my actions, but do not know how to go about it. What particulars am I to take notice of? If you would direct me to the same or like method to your own I would gladly follow it, for I am fully convinced of the usefulness of such an undertaking. I shall be at a stand till I hear from you. I firmly believe that God will establish what he hath begun in me; and there is no one person I would so willingly have to be the instrument of good to me as you. It is owing, in great measure, to somebody's prayers (my mother's, most likely) that I am come to think as I do; for I cannot tell myself how or when I awoke out of my lethargy; only that it was not long after you went away.†

This letter was written in the beginning of 1729.

No sooner had Charles Wesley become devout than he longed to be useful to those about him. He began to attend the weekly sacrament, and induced two or three other students to attend with him. The regularity of their behavior led a young collegian to call them Methodists; and "as the name was new and quaint, it clave to them immediately, and from that time all that had any connection with them were thus distinguished."‡

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\* The Oxford Methodists. † The Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley, A.M.

‡ The name was in use in England long before it was applied to Wesley and his friends. In 1693 a pamphlet was published with the title, "A War among the Angels of the Churches: wherein is shewed the Principles of the New Methodists in the great point of Justification. By a Country Professor of Jesus Christ." And even as early as 1639, in a sermon preached at Lambeth, the following perfumed eloquence occurs: "Where are now our Anabaptists, and plain, pack-staff Methodists, who esteem all flowers of rhetoric in sermons no better than stinking weeds, and all elegance of speech no better than profane spells?" Wesley's own definition, as found in his Dictionary, published in 1753: "A Methodist—one that lives according to the method laid down in the Bible." "The name of Methodist," it is observed by one of Wesley's correspondents, "is not a new name never before given to any religious people. Dr. Calamy, in one of his volumes of the ejected ministers, observes, They called those who stood up for God, Methodists."

The duties of his fellowship recalled John from the country late in 1729, and the rector of Lincoln put eleven pupils under his care immediately. "In this employ," he says, "I continued till 1735, when I went as a *missioner* to Georgia." On his return to Oxford he naturally took the lead of the little band of Methodists. They rallied round him at once, feeling his fitness to direct them. He was their master-spirit, and soon compacted the organization and planned new methods of living and working. The first Methodists were the two Wesleys, with Robert Kirkham and William Morgan. To these were subsequently added Whitefield, Clayton, Broughton, Ingham, Hervey, White-lamb, Hall, Gambold, Kinchin, Smith, Salmon, Wogan, Boyce, Atkinson, and others. Some of them made history. John Gambold became a Moravian bishop, but like the leaders of the Holy Club, it was not until after years of laborious endeavor to establish a righteousness of his own that he was led to submit to "the righteousness of God, by faith of Jesus Christ." He gives an original and inside view of the organization:

About the middle of March, 1730, I became acquainted with Mr. Charles Wesley of Christ College. I was just then come up from the country, and had made a resolution to find out some pious persons to keep company with. I had been, for two years before, in deep melancholy. No man did care for my soul; or none at least understood its paths. One day an old acquaintance entertained me with some reflections on the whimsical Mr. Wesley, his preciseness and pious extravagances. Upon hearing this, I suspected he might be a good Christian. I therefore went to his room, and without any ceremony desired the benefit of his conversation. I had so large a share of it henceforth that hardly a day passed, while I was at college, but we were together once, if not oftener. After some time he introduced me to his brother John, of Lincoln College. "For," said he, "he is somewhat older than I, and can resolve your doubts better." This, as I found afterward, was a thing which he was deeply sensible of; for I never observed any person have a more real deference for another than he constantly had for his brother. I shall say no more of Charles, but that he was a man made for friendship; who, by his cheerfulness and vivacity, would refresh his friend's heart; and by a habit of openness and freedom, leave no room for misunderstanding.

The Wesleys were already talked of for some religious practices, which were first occasioned by Mr. Morgan, of Christchurch. From these combined friends began a little society; for several others, from time to time, fell in; most of them only to be improved by their serious and useful discourse; and some few espousing all their resolutions and their whole way of life.

Mr. John Wesley was always the chief manager, for which he was very fit; for he not only had more learning and experience than the rest, but he was blest with such activity as to be always gaining ground, and such steadiness that he lost none. What proposals he made to any were sure to charm them, because he was so much

in earnest; nor could they afterward slight them, because they saw him always the same. To this I may add that he had, I think, something of authority in his countenance; though, as he did not want address, he could soften his manner, and point it as occasion required.

It was their custom to meet most evenings either at his chamber or one of the others, where, after some prayers (the chief object of which was charity), they ate their supper together, and he read some book. But the chief business was to review what each had done that day, in pursuance of their common design, and to consult what steps were to be taken the next. Their undertaking included several particulars: To converse with young students, to visit the prisons, to instruct some poor families, and to take care of a school and a parish work-house.

They took great pains with the younger members of the university, to rescue them from bad company, and encourage them in a sober, studious life. If they had some interest with any such, they would get them to breakfast, and over a dish of tea, endeavor to fasten some good hint. For some years past he and his friends read the New Testament together at evening. After every portion of it, having heard the conjectures the rest had to offer, he made his observations on the phrase, design, and difficult places. One or two wrote these down from his mouth. He laid much stress upon self-examination. He taught them to take account of their actions in a very exact manner by writing a constant diary. Then, to keep in their minds an awful sense of God's presence, with a constant dependence on his help, he advised them to ejaculatory prayers. They had a book of Ejaculations relating to the chief virtues, and lying by them as they stood at their studies, they at intervals snatched a short petition out of it. But at last, instead of that variety, they contented themselves with the following aspirations (containing acts of faith, hope, love, and self-resignation at the end of every hour): "Consider and hear me," etc. The last means he recommended was meditation. Their usual time for this was the hour next before dinner. After this he committed them to God. What remained for him to do was to encourage them in the discomforts and temptations they might feel, and to guard them against all spiritual delusions. In this spiritual care of his acquaintance, Mr. Wesley persisted amidst all discouragements. He overlooked not only one's absurd or disagreeable qualities, but even his coldness and neglect of him, if he thought it might be conquered. He helped one in things out of religion, that he might be more welcome to help him in that. His knowledge of the world and his insight into physic were often of use to us.

A meditative piety did not cover the whole ground of the Oxford Methodists. They studied how to do good in the prisons and among the poor. Doubtless methods and their results were often discussed. Gambold continues his account:

When a new prisoner came, their conversation with him for four or five times was particularly close and searching. Whether he bore no malice toward those that did prosecute him, or any others? The first time, after professions of goodwill, they only inquired of his circumstances in the world. Such questions imported friendship, and engaged the man to open his heart. Afterward they entered upon such inquiries as most concern a prisoner: Whether he submitted to

his disposal of Providence; whether he repented of his past life; last of all they asked him whether he constantly used private prayer, and whether he had ever communicated. Thus, most or all the prisoners were spoken to in their turns. But, if any one was either under sentence of death, or appeared to have some intentions of a new life, they came every day to his assistance; and partook in the conflict and suspense of those who should now be found able, or not able, to lay hold on salvation. In order to release those who were confined for small debts, and were bettered by their affliction, and likewise to purchase books, physic, and other necessities, they raised a small fund, to which many of their acquaintance contributed quarterly. They had prayers at the Castle most Wednesdays and Fridays, a sermon on Sundays, and the Sacrament once a month. When they undertook any poor family, they saw them at least once a week; sometimes gave them money, admonished them of their vices, read to them, and examined their children. The school was, I think, of Mr. Wesley's own setting up. At all events, he paid the mistress and clothed some, if not all, of the children. When they went thither they inquired how each child behaved, saw their work (for some could knit and spin), heard them read, heard them their prayers and catechism, and explained part of it. In the same manner they taught the children in the work-house, and read to the old people as they did to the prisoners.

Though some practices of Mr. Wesley and his friends were much blamed, they seldom took any notice of the accusations brought against them; but if they made any reply it was commonly such a plain and simple one as if there was nothing more in the case, but that they had heard such doctrines of their Saviour, and believed and done accordingly.

In August, 1732, Wesley was made a member of "The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge;" and during his stay in London, received from Clayton a long letter, a few sentences from which will help to give the reader an insight into the prison-work of the Oxford Methodists:

All the felons were acquitted, except Salmon, who is to be tried at Warwick; and the sheep-stealer, who is burnt in the hand, and is a great penitent. Jempro is discharged, and I have appointed Harris to read to the prisoners in his stead. Two of the felons likewise have paid their fees and are gone out, both of them able to read mighty well. There are only two in the gaol who want this accomplishment—John Clanville, who reads but moderately; and the horse-stealer, who cannot read at all, though he knows all his letters and can spell most of the monosyllables. I hear them both read three times a week, and I believe Salmon hears them so many times daily. The woman, who was a perfect novice, spells tolerably; and so does one of the boys; and the other makes shift to read with spelling every word that is longer than ordinary. They can both say their catechism to the end of the commandments, and can likewise repeat the morning and evening prayers for children in Ken's Manual.\*

In all this the world saw naught but oddity and folly, and called these hard-working tutors and godly students "Bible bigots," and

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\* Tyerman's Oxford Methodists.

"Bible moths." In the university John Wesley and his friends became a common topic of mirth, and were jeeringly designated "The Holy Club." John consulted his father, and was encouraged: "As to your designs and employments, what can I say less than *Valde probe* [I strongly approve]; and that I have the highest reason to bless God that he has given me two sons together at Oxford, to whom he has granted grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil? I hear my son John has the honor of being styled the 'Father of the Holy Club;' if it be so, I must be the grandfather of it; and I need not say that I had rather any of my sons should be so dignified and distinguished than to have the title of *His Holiness*."

Once during John Wesley's absence from Oxford, the little band, through persecution and desertion, was greatly weakened; at another time he returned to find it reduced from twenty-seven to five—showing clearly that he was the soul of the movement. In 1732 James Hervey, author of the "Meditations," joined them. His very popular and peculiar style of writing turned the attention of the upper classes of society to religious subjects perhaps more than any other writer of his time. The next year came George Whitefield. Though they diverged from Wesley afterward, they lived, labored, and died "Methodists."

Whitefield has left a characteristic account of his connection with the "Holy Club." He was born in 1714, at the Bell Inn, Bristol. "If I trace myself," he says, "from my cradle to my manhood, I can see nothing in me but a fitness to be damned." Yet Whitefield could trace early movings of his heart, which satisfied him in after-life that "God loved him, with an everlasting love, and had separated him even from his mother's womb, for the work to which he afterward was pleased to call him." He had a devout disposition and a tender heart, so far as these terms can fitly characterize unregenerate men.

When about fifteen years old he "put on his blue apron and his snuffers," washed mops, cleaned rooms, and became a "common drawer." He gave evidence of his natural powers of eloquence in school declamations, and while in the Bristol Inn composed two or three sermons. Hearing of the possibility of obtaining an education at Oxford, as a "poor student," he prepared himself and went thither, and was admitted a servitor of Pembroke College. The Methodists were not only the common butt of Oxford

ridicule, but their fame had spread as far as Bristol before Whitefield left his home. He had "loved them," he tells us, before he entered the university. He longed to be acquainted with them, and often watched them passing through the sneering crowds, to receive the sacrament at St. Mary's; but he was a poor youth, the servitor of other students, and shrunk from obtruding himself upon their notice. At length a woman, in one of the work-houses, attempted to cut her throat; and Whitefield, knowing that both the Wesleys were ready for every good work, sent a poor aged apple-woman to inform Mr. Charles Wesley of it, charging her not to discover who sent her. She went, but contrary to orders told his name, and this led Charles to invite him to breakfast next morning. He was now introduced to the rest of the Methodists, and he also, like them, "began to live by rule, and pick up the very fragments of his time, that not a moment might be lost." Being in great distress about his soul, he lay whole days prostrate on the ground, in silent or vocal prayer; he chose the worst sort of food; he fasted twice a week; he wore woolen gloves, a patched gown, and dirty shoes; and, as a penitent, thought it unbecoming to have his hair powdered.

This neglect of his person lost him patronage and cut off some of his pay. Charles Wesley lent him a book, "The Life of God in the Soul of Man;" and he says:

Though I had fasted, watched, and prayed, and received the sacrament so long, yet I never knew what true religion was, till God sent me that excellent treatise by the hands of my never-to-be-forgotten friend. In reading that "true religion was a union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us," a ray of divine light was instantaneously darted in upon my soul; and from that moment, but not till then, did I know that I must be a new creature. The first thing I was called to give up for God was what the world calls my fair reputation. I had no sooner received the sacrament publicly on a week-day, at St. Mary's, but I was set up as a mark for all the polite students that knew me to shoot at. By this they knew that I was commenced Methodist. Mr. Charles Wesley walked with me, in order to confirm me, from the church even to the college. I confess, to my shame, I would gladly have excused him; and the next day, going to his room, one of our fellows passing by, I was ashamed to be seen to knock at his door. But, blessed be God, the fear of man gradually wore off. As I had imitated Nicodemus in his cowardice, so, by the divine assistance, I followed him in his courage. I confessed the Methodists more and more publicly every day. I walked openly with them, and chose rather to bear contempt with those people of God than to enjoy the applause of almost-Christians for a season.

It may be inferred, but might as well be stated on the testimony of John Wesley, that it was the practice of the Oxford

Methodists to give away each year all they had after providing for their own necessities; and then, as an illustration, he adds, in reference to himself: "One of them had thirty pounds a year. He lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away thirty-two. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received a hundred and twenty pounds; still he lived as before on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor all the rest." Such was the typical Oxford Methodist.

He maintained the doctrine of apostolical succession, and believed no one had authority to administer the sacraments who was not *episcopally* ordained. He religiously observed saint-days and holidays, and excluded Dissenters from the holy communion, on the ground that they had not been properly baptized. He observed ecclesiastical discipline to the minutest points, and was scrupulously strict in practicing rubrics and canons.

In fasting, in mortification, in alms-giving, in well-doing, and by keeping the whole law, he sought purity of heart and peace of conscience. He was intensely earnest, sincere, and self-denying. In all this, while a prodigy of piety in the eyes of man, there was a felt want of harmony with God, and a feebleness amounting to impotency, in the propagation of his faith among men. Like one of old, he could say: "I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." Sacramentarian, ritualist, legalist: "What lack I yet?"

## CHAPTER V

Breaking up of the Epworth Family—Death and Widowhood—The Parents  
The Daughters and their History.

THE year 1735 witnessed the breaking up of the two families in which Methodism was born and nursed—one at Epworth and the other at Oxford. After a faithful ministry of forty-seven years, Samuel Wesley died in April. He had been manifestly ripening for his change, and in his last moments had the consolation of the presence of his two sons, John and Charles. From both of them we have accounts of the death-bed scene.

Charles, writing a long letter two days after the funeral to his brother Samuel, says: "You have reason to envy us, who could attend him in the last stage of his illness. The few words he could utter I saved, and hope never to forget. Some of them were: 'Nothing too much to suffer for heaven. The weaker I am in body, the stronger and more sensible support I feel from God. There is but a step between me and death.' The fear of death he had entirely conquered, and at last gave up his latest human desires of finishing Job, paying his debts, and seeing you. He often laid his hand upon my head and said: 'Be steady. The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not.' To my sister Emily, he said: 'Do not be concerned at my death; God will then begin to manifest himself to my family.' On my asking him whether he did not find himself worse, he replied: 'O my Charles, I feel a great deal; God chastens me with strong pain, but I praise him for it, I thank him for it, I love him for it!' On the 25th his voice failed him, and nature seemed entirely spent, when, on my brother's asking whether he was not near heaven, he answered distinctly, and with the most of hope and triumph that could be expressed in sounds, 'Yes, I am.' He spoke once more, just after my brother had used the commendatory prayer; his last words were, 'Now you have done all!'"

John Wesley, in his sermon on Love, preached at Savannah (1736), adverts to his father's death: "When asked, not long before his release, 'Are the consolations of God small with you?' he replied aloud, 'No, no, no!' and then calling all that were



near him by their names, he said: 'Think of heaven, talk of heaven; all the time is lost when we are not thinking of heaven.'"

In his controversy with Archbishop Secker (1748), on the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, he cites personal experience:

My father did not die unacquainted with the faith of the gospel, of the primitive Christians, or of our first Reformers; the same which, by the grace of God, I preach, and which is just as new as Christianity. What he experienced before I know not; but I know that, during his last illness, which continued eight months, he enjoyed a clear sense of his acceptance with God. I heard him express it more than once, although, at that time, I understood him not. "The inward witness, son, the inward witness," said he to me, "that is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity." And when I asked him (the time of his change drawing nigh), "Sir, are you in much pain?" he answered aloud with a smile: "God does chasten me with pain—yea, all my bones with strong pain; but I thank him for all, I bless him for all, I love him for all!" I think the last words he spoke, when I had just commended his soul to God, were, "Now you have done all!" and, with the same serene, cheerful countenance, he fell asleep without one struggle, or sigh, or groan. I cannot therefore doubt but the Spirit of God bore an inward witness with his spirit that he was a child of God.

In the long sickness that preceded death the good old rector had occasion to acknowledge the kindness of his people. He outlived the brutal hostility with which he was met during the first years of his residence at Epworth, and his dozen communicants had increased to above a hundred. One of his sayings was, "The Lord will give me at the last all my children, to meet in heaven." To him belongs the distinction of being "the father of the greatest evangelist of modern times, and of the best sacred poet that has flourished during the Christian era." That the three sons of Epworth parsonage became polished shafts is largely due to the scholarly inspiration and care of their father. He had, under great difficulties, obtained a university education himself, and could not be content with a less heritage for them.

Samuel Wesley was buried in his church-yard; and upon the tombstone his widow had these words inscribed as part of the epitaph: "As he lived so he died, in the true catholic faith of the Holy Trinity in Unity, and that *Jesus Christ* is God incarnate, and the only Saviour of mankind."

Methodism owes a debt to endowed scholarships, fellowships, and institutions of learning. Without them, Samuel Wesley and his sons, with George Whitefield, must have gone without the educational outfit which, under God, so mightily prepared them for their life-work. John was maintained six years at Char-

terhouse, and thence sent forward to Oxford upon this foundation. As fellow of Lincoln College, he matured and enlarged his post-graduate attainments, and upon this income initiated Methodism before it was organized so as to support its ministry. In the same way Charles, after becoming a "king's scholar," at Westminster, went through that fine training-school, and afterward graduated at the university. The income of Epworth was utterly unable to bear these charges. The arrangement that made it possible for the elder Wesley and for George Whitefield to get through as "servitors" is part of the same wisdom that lays a "foundation" to bless the ages. Let one think, if he can, of Methodism without these four men; and think of these four men without education.

Those dying-words to his children, "The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not," were prophetic. Seven years afterward, John stood on that tombstone and preached the gospel to great and awakened multitudes, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

A veil is drawn over the parting from old Epworth. Neither of the sons could be prevailed on to succeed their father in the rectory, and so the connection of the family with the spot endeared by associations extending over forty years comes to an end. Beautiful in sorrow, and with the weight of years added to her solitary condition, the mother leaves the memorable place to spend the seven years of her earthly pilgrimage as a widow in about equal portions with four of her children, Emilia, Samuel at Tiverton, Martha, and John in London. In the last change she gathered her five living daughters around her at the Foundry, and, not far from where she commenced, there in peaceful quiet she closed the journey of life, after a glorious but suffering career of seventy-three years. They stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech: "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God." *Released* was her beautiful thought of death.\*

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\* Dr. Adam Clarke, in summing up the incidents of her life, says: "I have been acquainted with many pious females; I have read the lives of others; but such a woman, take her for all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted. Such a one Solomon has described at the end of his Proverbs; and adapting his words I can say, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but SUSANNA WESLEY has excelled them all.'"

Still further anticipating history, before taking final leave of the family, we glance at the seven daughters—gifted, cultivated, affectionate, and some of them beautiful women. What unhappy marriages, leading to unhappy lives! This may not be accounted for on the theory that over-education unfitted them for their social sphere. Let us rather look for the cause in a state of things that has not wholly disappeared in our own day—the few suitable avenues that were open to educated women for self-support. Emily, the oldest, was a woman in whom virtue, form, and wit were combined in harmony. She had an exquisite taste for music and poetry. Her brother John pronounced her the best reader of Milton he had ever heard.

Her letters to her brothers are fine specimens of writing. She was occasionally impatient at the straits of the situation, and no wonder. The money spent on “those London journeys” and “convocations of blessed memory” would, in her opinion, have been better spent in quieting “endless duns and debts,” and in buying clothes for the family.

While John was playing at ritualism, he seems to have proposed to her confession and penance. The reply is thoroughly Wesleyan:

Now what can I answer? To indicate my own piety looks vain and ridiculous; to say I am in so bad a way as you suppose me to be would perhaps be unjust to myself and unthankful to God. To lay open the state of my soul to you, or any of our clergy, is what I have no manner of inclination to at present, and believe I never shall. Nor shall I put my conscience under the direction of mortal man, frail as myself. To my own Master I stand or fall; yea, I shall not scruple to say that all such desires in you, or any other ecclesiastic, seem to me to look very much like Church tyranny, and assuming to yourselves a dominion over your fellow-creatures which never was designed you by God.

She married a dull and thriftless man—a “tradesman without a trade”—and by keeping a scantily furnished boarding-school, she supported herself and him. For many years a “widow indeed,” she was useful in her brother’s “classes,” and died at fourscore.

From injury received in infancy, Mary grew up deformed in body and short in stature, but beautiful in face and in mind. This condition exposed her to unseemly remarks from the ignorant and vulgar when she walked abroad. She alone seems to have been married to suit herself and others; but in one short year mother and babe lay in the same grave. When Charles

was passing through college, worrying with a short purse, she wrote: "Dear brother, I beg you not to let the present straits you labor under narrow your mind, or render you morose or churlish in your converse with your acquaintance, but rather resign yourself and all your affairs to Him who best knows what is fittest for you, and will never fail to provide for whoever sincerely trusts in him. I think I may say I have lived in a state of affliction ever since I was born, being the ridicule of mankind and the reproach of my family, and I dare not think God deals hardly with me." A lovely character, her death was rich in elegies from the gifted family.

Anne was so matched as to lead a quiet if not happy life. Her husband was kind, but intemperate. Susanna's husband was rich, but coarse and depraved. The rector spoke of him as the "wen of my family;" and the rector's wife, in the anguish of a mother's heart, wrote to a childless relative:

My second daughter, Sukey, a pretty woman, and worthy a better fate, rashly threw away herself upon a man (if a *man* he may be called who is little inferior to the apostate angels in wickedness) that is not only her plague, but a constant affliction to the family. O sir! O brother! happy, thrice happy, are you; happy is my sister, that buried your children in infancy! secure from temptation, secure from guilt, secure from want or shame, or loss of friends! They are safe beyond the reach of pain or sense of misery; being gone hence, nothing can touch them further. Believe me, sir, it is better to mourn ten children dead than one living; and I have buried many.

His conduct to his wife is represented as harsh and despotic, and under his unkindness "she well-nigh sunk into the grave." At last she fled from him, and found a peaceful death with her children. Some of her last words, after she had been speechless for some time were, "Jesus is here! Heaven is love!" Wesleyan missionaries to the West Indies, and ministers for the Established Church, were of her offspring.\*

In Hetty [Mehetabel] nearly all the graces and gifts of her brothers and sisters were combined. Her personal appearance, accomplishments, and mental endowments were remarkable,

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\*The bad, rich man, her husband, became beggarly poor at the last, and also penitent. Charles Wesley says (London, April 11, 1760): "Yesterday evening I buried my brother Ellison. He believed God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven him. I felt a most solemn awe overwhelming me while I committed his body to the earth. He is gone to increase my father's joy in paradise, who often said *every one of his children* would be saved, for God had given them all to him in answer to prayer. God grant I may not be the single exception!"

even for the Wesley family. At the age of eight years she had made such proficiency in classical knowledge that she could read the Greek Testament. Good judges pronounced her poetic gift equal to her younger brother's. Her fancy, wit, and genius outran her judgment, and caused her parents both anxiety and trouble. Her ill-fated marriage took place during the year 1725. Never perhaps were two persons, united in marriage, more unsuited to each other. Her husband was illiterate, vulgar, and unkind; of loose habits, and given to drink.

The following verses were breathed out of Hetty's soul on the early death of her first-born. In an ill-spelled note, the father conveyed the sad news to the two brothers, and adds a postscript:

PS.—Ive sen you Sum Verses that my wife maid of Dear Lamb Let me hear from one or both of you as Soon as you think Convenient. W W.

#### A MOTHER'S ADDRESS TO HER DYING INFANT.

Tender softness! infant mild!  
 Perfect, purest, brightest child!  
 Transient luster! beauteous clay!  
 Smiling wonder of a day!  
 Ere the last convulsive start  
 Rend thy unresisting heart;  
 Ere the long-enduring swoon  
 Weigh thy precious eyelids down;  
 Ah, regard a mother's moan,  
 Anguish deeper than thy own!  
 Fairest eyes! whose dawning light  
 Late with rapture blest my sight,  
 Ere your orbs extinguished be,  
 Bend their trembling beams on me!  
 Drooping sweetness! verdant flower,  
 Blooming, withering in an hour!  
 Ere thy gentle breast sustains  
 Latest, fiercest, mortal pains,  
 Hear a suppliant! let me be  
 Partner in thy destiny:  
 That whene'er the fatal cloud  
 Must thy radiant temples shroud;  
 When deadly damps, impending now,  
 Shall hover round thy destined brow,  
 Diffusive may their influence be,  
 And with the blossom blast the tree!

*September, 1728.*

With a degree of perverseness, Hetty held out long, but finally and heartily became a Methodist, and died well. By and by the

dolt and drunkard, who had wearied and worried the life out of her, came to his end praying and repenting, and her forgiving brothers ministered to him and buried him.\*

At a time when she believed and hoped that she should soon be at peace in the grave, she composed this epitaph for herself:

Destined while living to sustain  
An equal share of grief and pain,  
All various ills of human race  
Within this breast had once a place.  
Without complaint she learn'd to bear  
A living death, a long despair;  
Till hard oppress'd by adverse fate,  
O'ercharged, she sunk beneath the weight,  
And to this peaceful tomb retired,  
So much esteem'd, so long desir'd.  
The painful, mortal conflict's o'er;  
A broken heart can bleed no more.

The youngest of the family died unmarried, after a disappointment that embittered her life. Her death was witnessed by Charles, who had often wept and prayed with her. He writes (March 10, 1741): "Yesterday morning sister Kezzy died in the Lord Jesus. He finished his work and cut it short in mercy. Full of thankfulness, resignation, and love, without pain or trouble, she commended her spirit into the hands of Jesus, and fell asleep."

Martha was the counterpart of John. The points of similarity in person, manners, habits of thought, patient endurance, and in other respects, were so marked that Dr. Adam Clarke, who had an intimate personal knowledge of both, has said that if they could have been seen dressed alike it would not have been possible to distinguish the one from the other. Her letters to her brothers make a part of that admirable correspondence by which the current of love and mutual confidence was kept flowing through every member of the family. Writing to John when he was standing for his fellowship, she says: "I believe you very well deserve to be happy, and I sincerely wish you may be so, both in this life and the next. For my own particular, I have long looked upon myself to be what the world calls ruined—that is, I believe there will never be any provision made for me; but when my father dies I shall have my choice of three things:

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\* Stevenson's Memorials of the Wesley Family.

starving, going to a common service, or marrying meanly, as my sisters have done; none of which I like." She married Westley Hall, a clergyman—an Oxonian, and one of the original "Holy Club." He is described by Dr. A. Clarke as "a curate in the Church of England, who became a Moravian, a Quietist, a Deist (if not an Atheist), and a Polygamist—which last he defended in his teaching and illustrated by his practice." Her husband deserted her, her children died. She was never known to speak unkindly of him, even at the worst. She was the friend of Samuel Johnson, and often took tea with the literary Jove, who enjoyed her Christian refinement and quiet wisdom; and these occasions furnished Boswell with quotable paragraphs. To one speaking of her severe trials she replied: "Evil was not kept from me; but evil has been kept from harming me." Even when reproving sin, she was so gentle that no one was ever known to be offended thereby. Her kindly nature remained unchanged to the end of life, and she lived to be eighty-five—outliving all the Epworth family. John Wesley remembered his sister in his will, leaving her a legacy of £40, to be paid out of the proceeds of the sale of his books. Her last illness was brief; she had no disease, but a mere decay of nature. She spoke of her dissolution with the same tranquillity with which she spoke of every thing else. A little before her departure she said: "I have now a sensation that convinces me that my departure is near; the heart-strings seem gently but entirely loosened." Her niece asked her if she was in pain. "No, but a new feeling." Just before she closed her eyes she bid her niece come near; she pressed her hand, and said: "I have the assurance which I have long prayed for. Shout!"—and expired. Her remains were interred in the City Road burial-ground, in the same vault with her brother; and on her tomb is the following inscription: "She opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness (Prov. xxxi. 26)."

## CHAPTER VI.

The Oxford Family Broken Up—Glances at the History of its Several Members—  
The Georgia Colony—Why the Wesleys went as Missionaries.

THERE was a strong missionary spirit in the Wesley family when Christian missions to the heathen scarce existed. The John Wesley of 1662, after being ejected from his church-living, longed to go as a missionary to Maryland. Samuel Wesley, his son, when a young man, formed a magnificent scheme for the East, and was willing to undertake the mission under the Government's patronage. Now the Georgia Colony invites his sons, and they go. General Oglethorpe, its founder and governor, having taken out the first company of emigrants and settled them, published that a door was opened for the conversion of the Indians; and nothing seemed to be wanting but a minister who understood their language.

There is a good deal of romance in the conception of a mission to the heathen, as many ardent minds conceive of it; and John Wesley was not an exception. The charm of the mystic writers still hung about him; it was to be dispelled in the wilds of America. Though he had not embraced the peculiar sentiments of those who were grossly unscriptural, yet he still believed many of the mystic writers were, to use his own words, "the best explainers of the gospel of Christ;" and those that are supposed to be the purest of them continually cry out, "To the desert! to the desert!" At this time, having only attained to what St. Paul calls "the spirit of bondage unto fear," he found that company and almost every person discomposed his mind, and that all his senses were ready to betray him into sin, upon every exercise. All within him, as well as every creature he conversed with, tended to extort that bitter cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" No wonder he should close in with a proposal which seemed at one stroke to cut him off from both the smiling and the frowning world, and to enable him to be crucified with Christ, which he then thought could be only thus attained.

All our Atlantic coast had been taken up by charters and grants, save a narrow sea-front between the Savannah and the Altamaha



rivers. The Spaniards were in Florida, the English in the Carolinas, and the French in Canada and Louisiana. On the 9th of June, 1732, a charter was obtained from George II., erecting this thin slice of America into the Province of Georgia, and appointing Oglethorpe and twenty other gentlemen trustees to hold the same for a period of twenty-one years, "in trust for the poor." The name of Georgia was given to it in compliment to the sovereign under whose auspices it was commenced, and who subscribed £500. The design of the undertaking was twofold. It was to be an outlet to the redundant population at home, especially of London; and to be an asylum for such foreign Protestants as were harassed by popish persecution.

Those were days of harsh government. The gallows was the penalty for petty thefts; and each year at least four thousand unhappy men in Great Britain were immured in prison for the misfortune of being poor. A small debt was enough to expose a struggling man to imprisonment. A Parliamentary commission under Oglethorpe resulted in the release of hundreds. The persecution of the Moravians and the Saltzburgers in popish states excited the sympathy and indignation of Protestant England. The Bank of England presented a donation of £10,000; an equal amount was voted by the House of Commons; and the total sum raised, with but little effort, was £36,000. Within five months after the signing of the charter, the first company of emigrants—one hundred and twenty-six in number—set sail, with Oglethorpe as their commander. In February, 1733, the colonists reached the high bluff on which Savannah stands. The streets of the intended town were laid out, and the houses were constructed on one model. Other ship-loads followed, and more colonists found homes there. Each freeholder was allotted fifty acres of ground, five of which were near Savannah, and the remaining forty-five farther off. Thus began the Commonwealth of Georgia.

In a letter dated October 10, 1735, Wesley gives his reasons for going to Georgia:

My chief motive is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathen. They have no comments to construe away the text; no vain philosophy to corrupt it; no luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its unpleasing truths. They have no party, no interest to serve, and are therefore fit to receive the gospel in its simplicity. They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to

do, the will of God. A right faith will, I trust, by the mercy of God, open the way for a right practice; especially when most of those temptations are removed which here so easily beset me. It will be no small thing to be able, without fear of giving offense, to live on water and the fruits of the earth. An Indian hut affords no food for curiosity, no gratification of the desire of grand, or new, or pretty things. The pomp and show of the world have no place in the wilds of America.

And he sums up all in one sentence: "I cannot hope to attain the same degree of holiness here which I may there." An excellent authority\* thus explains the state of the two brothers: "According to their apprehensions, true holiness is attained principally by means of sufferings—mental and bodily; and hence they adopted this mode of life, resolved to do and suffer whatever it should please God to lay upon them. Their theological views were not only defective, but erroneous. They understood not the true nature of a sinner's justification before God; nor the faith by which it is obtained; nor its connection with sanctification. Holiness of heart and life was the object of their eager pursuit; and this they sought not by faith, but by works and personal austerity." The Georgia Trustees, inviting the Wesleys, told them "plausible and popular doctors of divinity were not the men wanted" for the infant colony; but they sought for men "inured to contempt of the ornaments and conveniences of life, to godly austerities, and to serious thoughts;" and such they considered them. They add: "You will find abundant room for the exercise of patience and prudence, as well as piety. One end for which we were associated was the conversion of negro slaves. As yet nothing has been attempted in this way, but a door is opened. The Purisburgers† have purchased slaves; they act under our influence; and Mr. Oglethorpe will think it advisable to begin there."

The hearty Yorkshire Methodist, Benj. Ingham, who was now a curate in the country, wrote Wesley: "I have had a great many turns and changes since I saw you. I believe I must be perfected through sufferings. Notwithstanding, by the blessing of God, I hope to press on, and persevere in the constant use of all the means of grace." He received, in reply: "Fast and pray, and then send me word whether you dare go with me to the Indians." He went, as also did Charles Delamotte, son of a London merchant, who had "a mind to leave the world and give

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\*Thomas Jackson's Life of C. Wesley. †Purisburg, a settlement twenty miles above Savannah, on the Carolina side of the river.

himself up entirely to God." This young man was so attached to Wesley that he asked leave to accompany him, even as his servant rather than miss being with him.

Before John Wesley consented to go as a missionary to the Indians, his mother was consulted. He dreaded the grief it would give her. "I am," said he, "the staff of her age, her chief support and comfort." On the proposal being put to Mrs. Wesley, she said: "If I had twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more." It was finally arranged that Charles should accompany him as secretary to the governor; and Charles was now ordained, that he might be able to officiate as a clergyman in the colony.

On October 14, 1735, Wesley embarked with his companions, taking with him five hundred and fifty copies of a treatise on the Lord's Supper, besides other books—"the gift of several Christian friends for the use of the settlers in Georgia." The head is taken away from them, and soon the Oxford family, like that at Epworth, will be scattered. Let us glance at them.

"Bob Kirkham" was of Merton College—son of a Gloucestershire clergyman. A rollicking fellow, wasting money and time, he seems to have been gained over to temperance and steadiness by our Fellow of Lincoln. In a letter to John Wesley, as early as 1726, he speaks of "your most deserving, queer character, your personal accomplishments, your noble endowments of mind, your little and handsome person, and your most obliging and desirable conversation." Three months after the first Methodist meeting in Oxford (1730), Wesley writes to his mother, describing the "strange" reformation: "Why, he has left off tea, struck off his drinking acquaintances to a man, given the hours above specified to the Greek Testament and Hugo Grotius, and spent the evenings either by himself or with my brother and me." Next year Kirkham left, and became his father's curate.\*

The Wesleys and Kirkham were the sons of English clergymen. Morgan was the son of an Irish gentleman, resident in Dublin. A young layman with a liberal allowance from his father, he moved the Methodists to add to Greek Testament readings and prayers and weekly communions the visiting of prisons and

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\*Tyerman, from whose interesting volume—"The Oxford Methodists"—our information is derived, concludes: "We have tried to obtain information concerning his subsequent career but have failed."

the care of the poor. He was the precursor of Howard, by a generation. Wesley writes:

In the summer of 1730, Mr. Morgan told me he had called at the gaol, to see a man who was condemned for killing his wife; and that from the talk he had with one of the debtors, he verily believed it would do much good, if any one would be at the pains of now and then speaking with them. This he so frequently repeated that, on the 24th of August, 1730, my brother and I walked with him to the Castle. We were so well satisfied with our conversation there that we agreed to go thither once or twice a week; which we had not done long, before he desired me to go with him to see a poor woman in the town, who was sick. In this employment, too, when we came to reflect upon it, we believed it would be worth while to spend an hour or two in a week.

Such "peculiar" conduct gave rise to criticism and opposition, and they consulted the old Epworth rector. Wesley's father wrote: "You have reason to bless God, as I do, that you have so fast a friend as Mr. Morgan, who, I see, in the most difficult service, is ready to break the ice for you. You do not know of how much good that poor wretch, who killed his wife, has been the providential occasion. I think I must adopt Mr. Morgan to be my son, together with you and your brother Charles; and, when I have such a ternion to prosecute that war, wherein I am now *miles emeritus*, I shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate."

Morgan's father wrote him very differently:

You cannot conceive what a noise that ridiculous society in which you are engaged has made here. Besides the particulars of the great follies of it at Oxford (which to my great concern I have often heard repeated), it gave me sensible trouble to hear that you were noted for going into the villages about Holt, calling their children together, and teaching them their prayers and catechism, and giving them a shilling at your departure. I could not but advise with a wise, pious, and learned clergyman. He told me that he has known the worst of consequences follow from such blind zeal; and plainly satisfied me that it was a thorough mistake of true piety and religion. I proposed writing to some prudent and good man at Oxford to reason with you on these points, and to convince you that you were in a wrong way. He said, in a generous mind, as he took yours to be, the admonition and advice of a father would make a deeper impression than all the exhortations of others. He concluded that you were young as yet, and that your judgment was not come to its maturity; but as soon as your judgment improved, and on the advice of a true friend, you would see the error of your way, and think, as he does, that you may walk uprightly and safely, without endeavoring to outdo all the good bishops, clergy, and other pious and good men of the present and past ages; which God Almighty give you grace and sense to understand aright!

Morgan's decease occurred in Dublin, August, 1732; and no sooner was the event known than it was wickedly and cruelly

alleged that his Methodist associates had killed him by fastings and overrighteousness.\*

The first of the many published defenses made by Methodists against public clamor was made on this occasion; and so thoroughly was the father of Morgan satisfied, instead of blaming them he became their faithful friend and defender. This was shown not in words only, but in deeds; for, during the next year, he sent his surviving son to Oxford, and placed him under the tuition of Wesley. This fashionable young man entered Lincoln College, bringing a favorite greyhound with him, and choosing men "more pernicious than open libertines" for his companions. Wesley did his best on the airy and thoughtless youth, but failed; at length he desired Hervey to undertake the task, and he succeeded. Gambold writes: "Mr. Hervey, by his easy and engaging conversation, by letting him see a mind thoroughly serious and happy, where so many of the fine qualities he most esteemed were all gone over into the service of religion, gained Mr. Morgan's heart to the best purposes."

The friendship between Clayton and the Wesley brothers was close and unbroken until the latter departed from Church usages, and became out-door evangelists. He was introduced to the Oxford Methodists in 1732, and at his recommendation they took to fasting twice a week. A model of diligence and self-denial, he never quailed before ridicule or even sterner measures of persecution. He continued and ended as he began—a ritualist, plunging into the Christian fathers, listening to apostolical and other canons as to the Bible, and displaying anxiety about sacramental wine being mixed with water.

John Wesley, between the years 1738 and 1773, visited Manchester (Clayton's parish) more than twenty times; and yet there is no evidence of any renewal of that fraternal intercourse which was interrupted when Wesley began to preach salvation by faith only, and, in consequence, was excluded from the pulpits of the Established Church. This was heresy too great. To be saved by faith in Christ, instead of by sacraments, fasts, pen-

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\* A short extract from Samuel Wesley's poem on Morgan's death:

Wise in his prime, he waited not till noon,  
Convinced that mortals "never lived too soon."  
As if foreboding then his little stay,  
He made his morning bear the heat of day.  
Nor yet the priestly function he invades:  
'T is not his sermon, but his life, persuades.

ances, ritualism, and good works, was deserving of Clayton's lifelong censure; and hence, after 1738, the two old Oxford friends seem to have been separated till they met in heaven.\*

Gambold's account of Wesley and his Oxford company has already been referred to. From another letter written to him before he returned from Georgia, we see the burden of Gambold's thoughts: "O what is regeneration? And what doth baptism? How shall we reconcile faith and fact? Is Christianity become effete, and sunk again into the bosom of nature? But to come to the point. That regeneration is the beginning of a life which is not fully enjoyed but in another world, we all know. But how much of it may be enjoyed at present? What degree of it does the experience of mankind encourage us to expect? And by what symptoms shall we know it?"

Similar thoughts were deeply engaging Wesley's mind at that very time. Two or three years afterward, the Rev. John Gambold, the learned, moping, gloomy, philosophic, poetic Mystic, became a humble, happy, trustful believer in Christ Jesus. He gave up his living, severed his connection with the Established Church and joined the Moravians. In 1754, as the chief English member of their community, he was ordained a "*Chor-Episcopus*," or Assistant Bishop. With some faults, at the beginning of its history in England, the *Unitas Fratrum* set a true and heroic example to other Churches, in its missions to the heathen; and the man who helped to purify, improve, and perpetuate such a community did no mean service to the Master. For seventeen years, he wore the honors of his office "with humility and diffidence."

The last time that he attended the public celebration of the Lord's Supper was only five days before his death. At the conclusion of it, weak and wasted, he commenced singing a verse of praise and thanksgiving, and the impression produced was such that the whole congregation began to weep.†

Hervey has been designated the Melancthon of the Methodist

\*Charles Wesley writes October 30, 1756: "I stood close to Mr. Clayton in church (as all the week past), but not a look would he cast toward me—

So stiff was his parochial pride."

†Tyerman, whose "Oxford Methodists" furnishes our sketch, thinks it was Gambold's yearning for *Christian fellowship* that united him to the Moravians—the fellowship that Methodist love-feasts and class-meetings, of a later day, afford.

Reformation. The flowing harmony and the elaborate polish of his works secured the attention of the upper circles of society to a far greater extent than the writings of Wesley. Hervey avowedly wrote for the *élite*; Wesley for the masses. His books passed through a marvelous number of editions in his day, and his "Contemplations" still finds readers. Whitefield wrote to him: "Blessed be God for causing you to write so as to suit the taste of the polite world! O that they may be won over to admire Him, who is indeed altogether lovely!" The "polite world" read his works because they were flowery; the Methodists, because they were savory; "and while, through their medium, the former looked at grace with less prejudice, the latter looked at nature with more delight." \*

Just before his ordination (1736), he wrote to Wesley, now in Georgia: "I have read your 'Journal,' and find that the Lord hath done great things for you already, whereof we rejoice. Surely, he will continue his loving-kindness to you, and show you greater things than these. Methinks, when you and dear Mr. Ingham go forth upon the great and good enterprise of converting the Indians, you will, in some respects, resemble Noah and his little household going forth of the ark."

Wesley had been his tutor, and Hervey often thanks him for having taught him Hebrew, and speaks of him gratefully as "the friend of my studies, the friend of my soul, the friend of all my valuable and eternal interests; that tender-hearted and generous Fellow of Lincoln, who condescended to take such compassionate notice of a poor undergraduate, whom almost everybody condemned, and for whose soul no man cared." It was said Hervey's mission was to "sanctify the sentimentalism of the day."

To one of the Oxford Methodists who had taken up residence at Bath—the gay watering-place—he gives these directions:

I would be earnest with God to make my countenance shine with a smiling serenity; that there might sit something on my cheeks which would declare the peace and joy of my heart. The world has strange apprehensions of the Methodists. They

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\* Devoutly he blesses the providence of God for his well-used microscope, which, in the gardens and fields, he almost always took with him. He believed and intimated that the discovery of so much of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the great Creator, even in the minutest parts of vegetable and animalcular creation, helped to attune his soul to sing the song of the four-and-twenty elders: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."—*Tyerman*.

imagine them to be so many walking mopes, more like the ghost in a play than sociable creatures. To obviate this sad prejudice, be always sprightly and agreeable. If a pretty turn of wit, or a diverting story offer itself to your mind, do not scruple to entertain the company therewith. Every thing that borders upon sourness, moroseness, or ill-breeding, I would cautiously avoid; and every thing that may give a beautiful or amiable idea of holiness, I would study to show forth. I do not mean, by what I have said, that you should make all sorts of compliances. A solicitation to join with your acquaintance in billiards, dice, cards, dancing, etc., should be rejected.

In his old age Wesley, while claiming the ability "to write floridly and rhetorically," adds: "I dare no more write in a *fine style* than wear a fine coat. I should purposely decline, what many admire, a highly ornamental style. I cannot admire French oratory; I despise it from my heart." It was otherwise with Hervey. Of set purpose he cultivated the "*fine style*." "My writings," said he, "are not fit for ordinary people; I never give them to such persons, and dissuade this class of men from procuring them. O that they may be of some service to the more refined part of the world! I don't pretend, nor do I wish, to write one *new* truth. The utmost of my aim is to represent old doctrines in a pleasing light, and dress them in a fashionable or genteel manner."

In 1739, Whitefield, replying to a friend who had read Hervey's "Meditations," overflows: "It has gone through six editions. The author of it is my old friend, a most heavenly-minded creature, one of the first of the Methodists, who is contented with a small cure, and gives all that he has to the poor. He is very weak, and daily waits for his dissolution. We correspond with, though we cannot see, one another. We shall, ere long, meet in heaven."

Hervey's charity to the poor was only limited by his means, and even such a limit was sometimes overstepped. To prevent embarrassment, his friends practiced upon him the innocent deception of borrowing his money when he received his salary, lest he should dispense it all in benefactions; and then repaying it as his necessities required. All the profits of his "Meditations," amounting to £700, he distributed in charitable donations; and directed that any profit arising from the sale of his books after his decease should be used in the same manner.

Hervey was converted after he had been preaching four years. Resting on his own works, and on communicating, and on alms-



giving, he at length rested on Christ. A sentence or two from a long letter to Whitefield will indicate his experience:

But I trust the divine truth begins to dawn upon my soul. Was I posset of all the righteous acts that have made saints and martyrs famous in all generations—could they all be transferred to me, and might I call them all my own—I would renounce them all that I might win Christ. My schemes are altered. I now desire to work in my blessed Master's service, not *for*, but *from*, salvation. I would now fain *serve* him who has *saved* me. I would glorify him before *men* who has justified me before *God*. I would study to please him in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. I seek this blessing not as a *condition*, but as a *part*—a choice and inestimable *part*—of that complete salvation which Jesus has purchased for me.

Hervey's published sermons are few in number. "I have never," said he, "since I was minister at Weston, used written notes; so that all my public discourses are vanished into air; unless the blessed Spirit has left any traces of them on the hearts of the hearers." One who heard him describes his later pulpit efforts: "His subjects were always serious and sublime; they might well be ranged under three heads—Ruin, Righteousness, and Regeneration. He always steered a middle course, between a haughty positivity and a skeptical hesitation."

The friendship of these Oxford Methodists was most sincere and cordial, but was not unruffled. The "moderate Calvinism" of Theron and Aspasio brought forth criticism from Wesley. He begs that Hervey will lay aside the phrase "the imputed righteousness of Christ," adding: "It is not scriptural, it is not necessary, it has done immense hurt." Their friendship was beclouded; and it is a mournful fact that the last few months of Hervey's lovely life (he died in 1758) were spent in fighting one who, a quarter of a century before, had been the greatest of his human oracles.

Broughton became curate of the Tower of London, where he had much to do with prisoners. He seems to have continued a sturdy Churchman, and opposed to the later development of Methodism. Charles Wesley, on visiting Newgate prison, in 1743, observes: "I found the poor souls turned out of the way by Mr. Broughton. He told them: 'There is no knowing our sins forgiven; and, if any could expect it, not such wretches as they, but the good people, who had done so and so. As for *his* part, he had it not himself; therefore it was plain they could not receive it.' " The same year Broughton was appointed the Secre-

tary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, an office which he held until his death in 1777. For thirty-four years the secretarial duties of this society were his principal employment. In the society's house he spent five hours every day in the week, except on Saturdays and Sundays. It was a Bible, Prayer-book, Religious Tract, Home and Foreign Mission, and Industrial Society, all in one, of which Broughton was the chief manager. It had the honor of being the pioneer of some of the greatest movements of the present day. It distributed Bibles long before the British and Foreign Bible Society existed. The great Religious Tract Society was not formed until twenty-two years after Broughton's death. Its foreign missions were few in number, but were important and successful—one of its missionaries being the celebrated Schwartz. One Sunday morning Broughton put on his ministerial robes and, according to his wont, retired into his room till church-time. The bells were ringing, and he continued in his closet. They ceased, but he made no appearance. His friends entered, and found him on his knees—dead. An original portrait of him hangs in the Room of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Kinchin, a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, left Oxford about the same time the Wesleys did, and became rector of a small village church. Like a good primitive Methodist, he visited from house to house, catechised the children, and had public prayers twice every day—in the morning before the people went to work, and in the evening, after their return. He was elected Dean of Corpus Christi, but he continued faithful to the principles of the Methodists, and, on the removal of Hervey, Whitefield, and others from the University, Kinchin assumed the spiritual charge of the prisoners. Charles Wesley, on his return from Georgia, hastened to Oxford, where, in February, 1737, he met with "good Mr. Gambold," "poor, languid Smith," and "Mr. Kinchin, whom," says he, "I found changed into a courageous soldier of Christ." He died in 1742.

Hall was, as has been seen, the Judas of the company—"a hawk among the doves of the Wesley family." It is on record by those who were with Hall during his dying-hours, that his last testimony concerning his deserted wife was: "I have injured an angel! an angel that never reproached me." John Wesley notes in his journal (January 2, 1776): "I came [to Bristol] just

time enough not to see but to bury poor Mr. Hall, my brother-in-law, who died on Wednesday morning, I trust in peace, for God had given him deep repentance. Such another monument of Divine mercy, considering how low he had fallen, and from what heights of holiness, I have not seen—no, not in seventy years.” The other Oxford Methodists—Boyce, Chapman, and Atkinson, and the rest—made small record. Glimpses of them show the parish priest, in humble places, doing his work—some in the later, and others in the earlier, Methodist spirit; but all earnest. The best we can say with certainty of each is: When last seen he was in good company. Of John Whitelamb—connected with both the Epworth and the Oxford families—there are a few memorials. He was the son of one of Samuel Wesley’s peasant parishioners at Wroot, and as an amanuensis, had rendered the rector important service for four years. While resident beneath his roof, Whitelamb acquired a sufficient knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages to enter Lincoln College, where he was principally maintained by the Epworth rector, and had John Wesley for his tutor.

Wesley wrote of him in 1731: “He reads one English, one Latin, and one Greek book alternately; and never meddles with a new one, in any of the languages, till he has ended the old one. If he goes on as he has begun, I dare take upon me to say that by the time he has been here four or five years there will not be such a one, of his standing, in Lincoln College, perhaps not in the University of Oxford.” Like his patrons, however, Whitelamb was very poor; and poverty implies trials. Obligated to wear second-hand gowns and other gear, he was spoken of by one not used to employ opprobrious epithets as “poor, starveling Johnny.”

In 1733 Whitelamb became Samuel Wesley’s curate, and soon afterward married his daughter Mary. She was eleven years older than himself. Her amiable temper made her the delight and favorite of the whole family. To provide for the newly-married pair, Samuel Wesley resigned to Whitelamb his rectory at Wroot. The village—a few miles from Epworth—was sequestered, and the salary small; but, despite their thatched residence, and the boorishness of the people among whom they lived, they were happy. Their union, however, was of brief duration. Within a year of their marriage the wife died.\*

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\*Stevenson’s Memorials of the Wesley Family.

At this time Oglethorpe returned from Georgia, whither he had gone with his first company of motley emigrants. Samuel Wesley, now within six months of his decease, took an intense interest in the Georgian colony, and declared that if he had been ten years younger he would gladly have devoted the remainder of his life and labors to the emigrants, and in acquiring the language of the Indians among whom they had to live. Among others who had gone to Georgia with Oglethorpe, and had returned with him, was one of Samuel Wesley's parishioners, of whom the venerable rector earnestly inquired whether the ministers who had migrated to the infant colony understood the Indian language, and could preach without interpreters. Correspondence with General Oglethorpe followed, and the rector had the pleasure, as he could not go himself into that missionary field, of forwarding an application from his son-in-law—inconsolable at his late bereavement. His sons John and Charles sailed for the colony next year, but for some unknown reason his son-in-law did not. Tyerman asks: "Did Whitelamb miss the way of Providence in not becoming a Georgian missionary? Perhaps he did. At all events, the remaining thirty-four years of his life seem to have been of comparatively small importance to his fellow-men. A person of retiring habits and fond of solitude," he lived and died at Wroot; and though he was unable to accept the later development of Methodism that was soon shaking the land, we must always think kindly of the man who made the gifted and afflicted Mary Wesley happy.

The Oxford family, like the Epworth, is broken up—dispersed forever. In a qualified sense, we may apply to Oxford Methodism the words of the sacred text: "A river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads."

## CHAPTER VII.

Voyage to Georgia—The Moravians—Lessons in a Storm—Reaches Savannah—Labors There—The Indians—A Beginning Made—The Wesleys Leave Georgia.

JOHN WESLEY is on board the ship Symmonds, bound for America, with one hundred and twenty-four persons—men, women, and children. His brother Charles, Benjamin Ingham, Charles Delamotte, and David Nitschman, are on board also. David is a Moravian bishop, and, accompanied by twenty-six Moravians, is on his way to visit the Brethren in Georgia, who had emigrated during the preceding year under the guidance of their ministers, Spangenberg, John Toelschig, and Anthony Seyffart.

Such were the chief of Wesley's fellow-voyagers. As already stated, they left London to embark, on October 14, 1735; but it was not until December that they fairly started. They encountered storms and calms; then had to await the man-of-war that was to be their convoy.

Ingham's journal reads:

We had two cabins allotted us in the forecastle; I and Mr. Delamotte having the first, and Messrs. Wesley the other. Theirs was made pretty large, so that we could all meet together to read or pray in it. This part of the ship was assigned to us by Mr. Oglethorpe, as being most convenient for privacy.

October 17. Mr. John Wesley began to learn the German tongue, in order to converse with the Moravians, a good, devout, peaceable, and heavenly-minded people, who were persecuted by the papists, and driven from their native country, upon the account of their religion. They were graciously received and protected by Count Zinzendorf, of Herrnhut, a very holy man, who sent them over into Georgia, where lands will be given them. There are twenty-six of them in our ship; and almost the only time that you could know they were in the ship was when they were harmoniously singing the praises of the Great Creator, which they constantly do in public twice a day, wherever they are. Their example was very edifying. They are more like the Primitive Christians than any other Church now in the world; for they retain both the faith, practice, and discipline delivered by the apostles.

From the same source we learn that, on October 18, Wesley and Ingham began to read the Old Testament together, and, at the rate of between nine and ten chapters daily, finished it before they arrived at Georgia. On the day following, Wesley commenced preaching without notes; and during the passage, in a

series of sermons, he went through the whole of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, and, every Sunday, had the sacrament.

General Oglethorpe was in command, but John Wesley was the religious head of the floating community, and his habits prevailed over all around him. The daily course of life among the Methodist party was directed by him. From four till five o'clock in the morning each of them used private prayer; from five till seven they read the Bible together, carefully comparing it with the writings of the earliest Christian ages; at seven they breakfasted; at eight were the public prayers. From nine to twelve Wesley usually studied German, and Delamotte Greek or Navigation, while Charles Wesley, lately ordained, wrote sermons, and Ingham instructed the children. At twelve they met to give an account of what they had done since their last meeting, and of what they designed to do before the next. About one they dined; the time from dinner to four was spent in reading to persons on board, a number of whom each of them had taken in charge. At four were the evening prayers, when either the second lesson was explained (as the first was in the morning) or the children were catechised and instructed before the congregation. From five to six they again used private prayer. From six to seven they read in their cabins to the passengers (of whom about eighty were English). At seven Wesley joined with the Germans in their public service, while Mr. Ingham was reading between the decks to as many as desired to hear. At eight they all met together again, to give an account of what they had done, whom they had conversed with, and to deliberate on the best method of proceeding with such and such persons: what advice, direction, exhortation, or reproof, was necessary for them. Sometimes they read a little, concluding with prayer; and so they went to bed about nine, sleeping soundly upon mats and blankets, regarding neither the noise of the sea nor of the sailors.

It has been well remarked that the ship became at once a Bethel and a seminary. "It was Epworth rectory and Susanna Wesley's discipline afloat on the Atlantic." The meeting of the Wesleys with the pious refugees appeared to be casual, but it was, in fact, one of those providential arrangements out of which the most momentous consequences arise. The great event of the voyage, as affecting Methodism, was the illustration of genuine religion which the little band of Moravian passengers

afforded. It made a deep impression upon the susceptible and observant minds of the two Wesleys, especially upon that of John.

A storm came upon them when within ten days' sail of the American continent. The waves of the sea were mighty, and raged horribly; the winds roared, and the ship not only rocked to and fro with the utmost violence, but shook and jarred with so unequal and grating a motion that the passengers could with difficulty keep their hold of any thing. Every ten minutes came a shock against the stern or side of the ship, which seemed as if it would dash the planks in pieces. In this state of things, John Wesley writes:

I went to the Germans. I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behavior. Of their humility they had given a continual proof, by performing those servile offices for the other passengers which none of the English would undertake, for which they desired and would receive no pay, saying it was good for their proud hearts and their loving Saviour had done more for them. And every day had given them occasion of showing a meekness which no injury could move. If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth. There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger, and revenge. In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the main-sail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them afterward, "Was you not afraid?" He answered, "I thank God, no." I asked, "But were not your women and children afraid?" He replied mildly, "No; our women and children are not afraid to die."

From them Wesley returned to the affrighted English, and pointed out the difference between him that feareth God and him that feareth him not; and then concludes his account of the storm by saying, "This was the most glorious day which I have hitherto seen." Thus he had a glimpse of a religious experience, which keeps the mind at peace under all circumstances, "and vanquishes that feeling which a formal and defective religion may lull to temporary sleep, but cannot eradicate—the fear of death."

The voyage was made in fifty-seven days. Oglethorpe seems to have acted with generosity and propriety toward his company in the cabin. He was irritable and impulsive, but magnanimous. Wesley, hearing an unusual noise in the General's cabin, entered to inquire the cause; on which the angry soldier cried: "Excuse me, Mr. Wesley, I have met with a provocation too great to bear

This villain, Grimaldi (an Italian servant), has drunk nearly the whole of my Cyprus wine, the only wine that agrees with me, and several dozens of which I had provided for myself. But I am determined to be revenged. The rascal shall be tied hand and foot, and be carried to the man-of-war; for I never forgive." "Then," said Wesley with great calmness, "I hope, sir, you never sin." Oglethorpe was confounded, his vengeance was gone; he put his hand into his pocket, pulled out a bunch of keys, and threw them at Grimaldi, saying: "There, villain! take my keys, and behave better for the future."

February 5, 1736, the Symmonds cast anchor in Savannah River; and on the following day the passengers landed upon a small island. Oglethorpe led the first company that left the ship, including the Wesleys, to a rising ground, where they all kneeled down to give thanks to God for their preservation. He now took boat for the settlement of Savannah, then a town of about forty houses. Oglethorpe's first act was to give orders to provide materials to build a church. Wesley met on his arrival in Georgia the well-known Moravian elder, August Gottlieb Spangenberg, and asked his advice how to act in his new sphere of labor. Spangenberg replied: "My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" Wesley was surprised at such questions. They were new to him. He was at a loss to answer. Spangenberg continued, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" This was easier, and Wesley answered, "I know he is the Saviour of the world." "True," said Spangenberg; "but do you know he has saved *you*?" Wesley was again perplexed, but answered, "I hope he has died to save me." Spangenberg only added, "Do you know yourself?" "I do," responded Wesley; "but," he writes, "I fear they were vain words." An enigmatical conversation, leading the Oxford priest to think on doctrines which it took him the next two years to understand.

Ingham and Charles Wesley went off with Oglethorpe to lay out the town of Frederica; and Wesley and Delamotte, having no house of their own to live in, lodged, during the first month, with Spangenberg, Nitschman, and other Moravians. Wesley writes: "They were always employed, always cheerful themselves, and in good humor with one another; they had put away all al-



ger, and strife, and wrath, and bitterness, and clamor, and evil-speaking; they walked worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called." His Churchly prejudices were rebuked by the apostolic purity of their ecclesiastical forms. They met, he says, to consult concerning the affairs of their Church—Spangenberg being about to go to Pennsylvania, and Bishop Nitschman to return to Germany. After several hours spent in conference and prayer, they proceeded to the election and ordination of a bishop. The great simplicity, as well as solemnity, of the proceeding almost made him forget the seventeen hundred years between him and the apostles, and imagine himself in one of those assemblies where form and state were unknown, but Paul the tent-maker or Peter the fisherman presided, yet with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

March 7 he commenced his ministry at Savannah, preaching on 1 Corinthians xiii. 3. He officiated at nine in the morning, at twelve, and again in the afternoon; and announced his design to administer the sacrament on every Sunday and on every holiday. A few days subsequent to this, writing to his mother, he remarked: "We are likely to stay here some months. The place is pleasant beyond imagination, and exceeding healthful. I have not had a moment's illness of any kind since I set my foot upon the continent; nor do I know any more than one of my seven hundred parishioners who is sick at this time."\*

In a few weeks after Wesley had commenced his ministry, he had established daily morning and evening public prayers. It was also agreed: "1. To advise the more serious to form themselves into a sort of little society, and to meet once or twice a week, in order to reprove, instruct, and exhort one another. 2 To select out of these a smaller number for a more intimate union with each other, which might be forwarded partly by conversing singly with each and partly by inviting all together to the pastor's house every Sunday in the afternoon." This he

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\* To make up that number of parishioners he counted the whole of Georgia as his parish. The Saltzburger arrived in March, the year before, and chose a settlement twenty miles from Savannah, where there were "rivers, little hills, clear brooks, cool springs, a fertile soil, and plenty of grass." To the spot which they had chosen as their settlement they gave the name of Ebenezer. The French settlers were at Highgate, five miles away; and the Germans at Hampstead; and the Highlanders at Darien—with their kirk minister, Macleod; and threescore souls were dwelling in the palmetto huts of Frederica, a hundred miles to the south. (Tyerman.)

afterward reckoned as the first *Methodist* society in America, and the second in the world.

Delamotte's school of between thirty and forty children were taught to read, write, and cast accounts. Wesley catechised them every Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Every Sunday he had three public services—at five in the morning, twelve at midday, and three in the afternoon. He visited from house to house, taking the midday hours in summer, because the people, on account of the heat, were then at home and at leisure. It seems that he also taught a school for a time. This legend is preserved: A part of the boys in Delamotte's school wore stockings and shoes, and the others not. The former ridiculed the latter. Delamotte tried to put a stop to this uncourteous banter, but told Wesley he had failed. Wesley replied: "I think I can cure it. If you will take charge of my school next week, I will take charge of yours, and will try." The exchange was made, and on Monday morning Wesley went into school barefoot. The children seemed surprised, but, without any reference to past jeerings, Wesley kept them at their work. Before the week was ended, the shoeless ones began to gather courage; and some of the others, seeing their minister and master come without shoes and stockings, began to copy his example, and thus the evil was effectually cured.

By and by he had enlarged his schedule of labor to this: He offered to read prayers and to expound the Scriptures in French, every Saturday afternoon, to the French families settled at Highgate; which offer was thankfully accepted. The French at Savannah heard of this, and requested he would do the same for them, with which request he willingly complied. He also began to read prayers and expound in German, once a week, to the German villagers of Hampstead. His Sunday labor was as follows: 1. English prayers from five o'clock to half-past six. 2. Italian prayers at nine. 3. A sermon and the holy communion for the English, from half-past ten to about half-past twelve. 4. The service for the French at one, including prayers, psalms, and Scripture exposition. 5. The catechising of the children at two. 6. The third English service at three. 7. After this, a meeting in his own house for reading, prayer, and praise. 8. At six, the Moravian service began, which he was glad to attend, not to teach, but learn.

Following a primitive but obsolete rubric, he would baptize children only by immersion; nor could he be induced to depart from this mode unless the parents would certify that the child was weakly. Persons were not allowed to act as sponsors who were not communicants. No baptism was recognized as valid unless performed by a minister episcopally ordained; and those who had allowed their children to be baptized in any other manner were earnestly exhorted to have them rebaptized. His rigor extended even so far as to refuse the Lord's Supper to one of the most devout men of the settlement, who had not been baptized by an episcopally ordained minister; and the burial-service itself was denied to such as died with what he deemed unorthodox baptism.\*

Both the brothers denied themselves not only the luxuries but many of the ordinary conveniences of life, living on bread and water. They enforced the forms of the Church with a repetition and rigor that tired out the people and provoked resentment. One of the colonists said to Wesley: "I like nothing you do; all your sermons are satires upon particular persons. Besides, we are Protestants; but as for you, we cannot tell what religion you are of. We never heard of such a religion before; we know not what to make of it."

Affairs were even worse in the palmetto-huts of Frederica than at Savannah. Charles and Ingham got into trouble there very soon. Ingham says (Feb. 29th): "After morning prayers I told the people that it was the Lord's day, and therefore ought to be spent in his service; that they ought not to go a-shooting, or walking up and down in the woods; and that I would take notice of all those who did. One man answered that these were new laws in America." Some of the colonists were imprisoned, as they said, because he "made a black list," and informed on them. As for Charles, he had been baptizing children by trine immersion—plunging them three times into water—and endeavoring to reconcile scolding women. Complaint was made that he held so many "services" as to interfere with

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\* In his journal for September 29, 1749, he gives a letter from John Martin Bolzius, and adds: "What a truly Christian piety and simplicity breathe in these lines! And yet this very man, when I was at Savannah, did I refuse to admit to the Lord's table, because he was not baptized; that is, not baptized by a minister who had been episcopally ordained. Can any one carry High-church zeal higher than this? And how well have I been since beaten with mine own staff!"

the people's daily labor. Liars and tale-bearers, lax women and unprincipled men, conspired to ruin him. The governor unwisely and unjustly listened to their reports, and treated his secretary and chaplain for awhile with cruel neglect. While all the others were provided with boards to sleep upon, he was left to sleep upon the ground. His few well-wishers became afraid to speak to him, and even his washer-woman refused in future to wash his linen. An attempt was even made to assassinate him. On one occasion, after dragging himself, fevered and worn-down, to a service, he had for his congregation two presbyterians and a papist.

Charles's mission to Frederica, like that of his brother at Savannah, was in the main a failure. As far as regards the great end for which the Christian ministry was instituted, they labored in vain. Why was this? The answer given by a well-instructed scribe in the kingdom of heaven is worth attention:

The principal cause of his [Charles Wesley's] want of success is doubtless to be found in the defectiveness of his theological views, and consequently of his own piety. Several of the sermons which he preached at Frederica are still extant in his own neat and elegant handwriting. In these we look in vain for correct and impressive views of the atonement and intercession of Christ, and of the offices of the Holy Spirit. It cannot here be said "Christ is all, and in all." No satisfactory answer is given to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Men are required to run the race of Christian holiness with a load of uncanceled guilt upon their consciences, and while the corruptions of their nature are unsubdued by renewing grace. The preacher has no adequate conception of a sinner's justification before God. He sometimes confounds this blessing with sanctification, and at other times he speaks of it as a something which is to take place in the day of judgment. Never does he represent it as consisting in the full and unmerited forgiveness of all past sins, obtained not by works of righteousness, but by the simple exercise of faith in a penitent state of the heart; and immediately followed by the gift of the Holy Ghost, producing peace of conscience, the filial spirit, power over all sin, and the joyous hope of eternal life. On the contrary, he satisfies himself with reproving the vices and sins of the people with unsparing severity, and with holding up the standard of practical holiness; denouncing the Divine vengeance against all who fall short of it; but without directing them to the only means by which they can obtain forgiveness and a new heart. The consequence was that the more serious part of the people were discouraged: for they were called to the hopeless task of presenting to God a spiritual service, while they were themselves the servants of sin; and of loving him with all their heart, while they were strangers to his forgiving mercy, and labored under a just apprehension of his wrath. Charles's ministry, like that of his brother, at this time did not embody those great doctrines of the evangelical dispensation which constitute "the truth as it is in Jesus," and upon which the Holy Ghost is wont to set his seal, by making them instrumental in the conversion and salvation of men.\*

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\* Jackson's Life of C. Wesley.

A writer in the *London Quarterly Review* for January, 1868, says: "We have before us a number of unpublished sermons written by John Wesley, at Oxford, during the ten years which followed his ordination. In not one of them is there any view whatever, any glimpse, afforded of Christ in any of his offices. His name occurs in the benediction—that is about all. Frequent communion is insisted on as a source of spiritual quickening; regeneration by baptism is assumed as the true doctrine of the Church; but Christ is nowhere, either in his life, his death, or his intercession."

After spending a little more than five months in Georgia, some duties connected with his secretaryship called Charles to Savannah; and from thence he was sent with dispatches to England, so that he never again visited Frederica, where he had met with such unworthy treatment. "I was overjoyed," he says, "at my deliverance out of this furnace, and not a little ashamed of myself for being so."

Leaving Ingham to take care of Savannah, and to keep up the school that consisted largely of orphans and the very poor, Wesley and his faithful layman, Delamotte, went to forsaken Frederica, and put in a few months of hard work there. At this day there is shown on the Island (St. Simons) a wide-spreading live-oak called "Wesley's Tree." Tradition has it that he preached under that tree.\*

But the Indians—what of them? It was to convert the Indians—those unsophisticated "children of nature"—that the Oxford Methodists came to America. That was their inspiring vision—not to preach to white settlers, influenced by petty jealousies and rivalries, and consisting, to a considerable extent, of reckless and unprincipled persons who had brought with them an assortment of the very European vices the "missioners" had hoped to leave behind. Ingham never lost sight of this object, and could hardly be restrained from entering on it at once. Wesley protested to the governor; but he urged that the troubles recently stirred up by the Spaniards and French made it dangerous to go among the Indians, and that it was inexpedient to

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\* Under this tree, a few years ago, a photographic group was taken of Lovick Pierce, D.D. (the oldest effective traveling preacher then in the United States, if not in the world), with his son, Bishop Pierce—a native Georgian—and Bishop Wightman, of South Carolina, and others.

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leave Savannah without a minister. Wesley answered that, though the Trustees of Georgia had appointed him to the office of minister of Savannah, this was done without his solicitation, desire, or knowledge; and that he should not continue longer than his way was opened to go among the Indians.

On his first voyage, Oglethorpe had carried back to England a sample, a rare trophy—Toma-Chache, a Muskogee king, and his suite. They were presented to George II., and his court, and made a great show of, with due effect on the public mind. It was not long after the landing of our “missioners” before the royal savage called on them. Ingham’s journal describes the interview:

A little after noon some Indians came to make us a visit. We put on our gowns and cassocks, spent some time in prayer, and then went into the great cabin to receive them. At our entrance they all rose up, and both men and women shook hands with us. When we were all seated, Toma-Chache, their king, spoke to us to this effect—through his interpreter, Mrs. Musgrove, a half-breed: “You are welcome. I am glad to see you here. I have a desire to hear the Great Word, for I am ignorant. When I was in England, I desired that some might speak the Great Word to us. Our nation was then willing to hear. Since that time we have been in trouble. The French on one hand, the Spaniards on the other, and the traders that are amongst us, have caused great confusion, and have set our people against hearing the Great Word. Their tongues are useless; some say one thing, and some another. But I am glad you are come.” All this he spoke with much earnestness and much action, both of his head and hands. Mr. John Wesley made him a short answer: “God only can teach you wisdom, and if you be sincere, perhaps he will do it by us.” We then shook hands with them again, and withdrew.

The queen made them a present of a jar of milk, and another of honey; that the missionaries might feed them, she said, with milk—for they were but children—and might be sweet to them.

Glad to get away from Frederica, Ingham is found among the Indians three months after reaching Georgia:

April 25.—We were thirty-four communicants. Our constant number is about a dozen. Next day Mr. Wesley and I went up to Cowpen in a boat bought for our use, to converse with Mrs. Musgrove about learning the Indian language. I agreed to teach her children to read, and to make her whatever recompense she would require more for her trouble. I am to spend three or four days a week with her, and the rest at Savannah, in communicating what I have learned to Mr. Wesley; because he intends, as yet, wholly to reside there. The Moravians being informed of our design, desired me to teach one of the brethren along with Mr. Wesley. To this I consented at once with my whole heart. And who, think ye, is the person intended to learn? Their lawful bishop [David Nitschman.]

April 30.—Mr. Wesley and I went up again to Cowpen, taking along with us Toma-Cache and his queen. Their town is about four miles above Savannah, in

the way to Mrs. Musgrove's. We told them we were about to learn their language. I asked them if they were willing I should teach the young prince. They consented, desiring me to check and keep him in; but not to strike him. The youth is sadly corrupted, and addicted to drunkenness.

The Indians gave to Ingham a plot of ground, in the midst of which was a small, round hill; and on the top of this hill a house was built for an Indian school. The house was named Irene. He soon formed a vocabulary of many words in the Indian language, and began an Indian grammar. An open door was set before them; more laborers were wanted, and Wesley wrote to a friend in Lincoln College (Feb. 16, 1737): "Mr. Ingham has left Savannah for some months, and lives at a house built for him a few miles off, near the Indian town. So that I have now no fellow-laborer but Mr. Delamotte, who has taken charge of between thirty and forty children. There is therefore great need that God should put it into the hearts of some to come over to us and labor with us in his harvest. But I should not desire any to come unless on the same views and conditions with us—without any temporal wages other than food and raiment, the plain conveniences of life. And for one or more, in whom was this mind, there would be full employment in the province. The difficulties he must then encounter God only knows; probably martyrdom would conclude them. But those we have hitherto met with have been small, and only terrible at a distance. Persecution, you know, is the portion of every follower of Christ, wherever his lot is cast."

Soon afterward, he writes: "It was agreed Mr. Ingham should go for England, and endeavor to bring over, if it please God, some of our friends to strengthen our hands in this work." Ingham left Savannah February 26. This is the last of him in Georgia. Arrived in England, he sought spiritual fellowship among his Christian friends in Yorkshire and Oxford, and, as opportunity offered, occupied the pulpit of the Established Church. His Methodist preaching created a sensation. A man with a soul like his—burning with zeal—could scarcely fail to be a successful evangelist. In a letter to Charles Wesley, October 22, 1737, he writes:

I have no other thoughts but of returning to America. When the time comes, I trust the Lord will show me. My heart's desire is that the Indians may hear the gospel. For this I pray both night and day. I will transcribe the Indian words as fast as I can.

Last Sunday, I preached such a sermon at Wakefield church as has set almost all about us in an uproar. Some say the devil is in me; others, that I am mad. Others say no man can live up to such doctrine, and they never heard such before; others, again, extol me to the sky. I believe, indeed, it went to the hearts of several persons; for I was enabled to speak with great authority and power; and I preached almost the whole sermon without book. There was a vast congregation, and tears fell from many eyes.

Ingham is evidently studying, and mindful of the people about Irene and Cowpens. Oglethorpe tried to get Charles to return. John meant to stay, and was arranging for his sister Kezzy to come out and keep house for him. Whitefield was preparing to come to his help. "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." As Wesley came to America so he left it, "contrary to all preceding resolutions." In four weeks from the date of the above letter, he had left Georgia forever.\* The Creeks or Muskogees, the Choctaws and Chickasaws, the Uchees and Cherokees, dwelt in the country lying between the thin strip of white settlements on the Atlantic and Gulf coast, and the Mississippi River. They were shy of the white man; but Wesley lost no opportunity of seeing and interviewing them and their occasional representatives—of hearing, through traders, of their numbers, customs, and worship: what he saw and heard doubtless modified his views, but did not abate his desire for the conversion of the Indians. He died without the sight. Methodism was to be honored of God in giving the gospel and a Christian

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\* Wesley's excessive pastoral fidelity and his ritualistic severity made enemies, and they found occasion to avenge themselves in an affair connected with one of his parishioners, Miss H——. It seems he thought of proposing marriage to her; but Delamotte warned him, and the Moravians advised him "to proceed no farther in the matter." Wesley answered: "The will of the Lord be done." The lady's uncle, Causton, of bad record, and then in brief authority, some time afterward hatched up indictments—ten bills, some civil and some ecclesiastical—against him. Wesley was prepared to answer, and moved for an immediate hearing; but the court evaded his request. From September 1, when the indictments were first presented, to the end of November, when Wesley made known his intention to return to England, he seems to have attended not fewer than seven different sittings of the court, asking to be tried on the matters over which it had jurisdiction, but denying its right to take cognizance of the ecclesiastical offenses alleged. Thus harassed and obstructed—power being in the hands of his enemies, and he unable and they unwilling to reach an issue—he gave notice of leaving, and left. This was what they wanted. Causton, the chief power in Oglethorpe's absence, came to disgrace and grief in a twelve-month, being turned out of all his offices. The enemies of Wesley and of Methodism have sedulously endeavored, but in vain, to fix a blot upon him in this matter.



civilization to the Indians, but not then. Its instruments were not ready. Its Pentecost had not come. By a way that Wesley knew not God would bring it about; and in less than a century Methodist preachers would have schools among those very tribes in which Indian children would be learning the Wesleyan Catechism, and thousands of Indian members under their pastoral care would make the Western wilds rejoice as, in their own language, they sung Wesleyan hymns.

This vision was not granted the missionary, and he left with his enemies exulting and his friends sad. He himself was saddest of all, for his mission seemed a failure. These are his reflections on the way back to England:

Many reasons I have to bless God for my having been carried to America, contrary to all my preceding resolutions. Hereby, I trust, he hath in some measure "*humbled me and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart.*" Hereby, I have been taught to "*beware of men.*" Hereby, God has given me to know many of his servants, particularly those of the Church of Herrnhut. Hereby, my passage is open to the writings of holy men, in the German, Spanish, and Italian tongues. All in Georgia have heard the word of God, and some have believed and begun to run well. A few steps have been taken toward publishing the glad tidings both to the African and American heathens. Many children have learned how they ought to serve God, and to be useful to their neighbor. And those whom it most concerns have an opportunity of knowing the state of their infant colony, and laying a firmer foundation of peace and happiness to many generations.

When Whitefield arrived in Georgia, a reaction had taken place, and he wrote: "The good Mr. John Wesley has done in America is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people; and he has laid a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake. O that I may follow him as he followed Christ!" John Wesley's latest and best historian thus concludes the account: "Who could have imagined that, in one hundred and thirty years, this huge wilderness would be transformed into one of the greatest nations upon earth? and that the Methodism, begun at Savannah, would pervade the continent, and, ecclesiastically considered, become the mightiest power existing?"

## CHAPTER VIII.

Whitefield: His Conversion and Preaching; Goes to Savannah—Orphan Asylum:  
What was Accomplished by this Charity.

WHITEFIELD had sailed for Georgia a few hours before the vessel which brought Wesley back to England cast anchor. The ships passed in sight of each other, but neither knew that so dear a friend was on the deck at which he was gazing. When Wesley landed he learned that his coadjutor was on board the vessel in the offing. It was still possible to communicate with him; and Whitefield was not a little surprised at receiving a letter which contained these words: "When I saw God by the wind which was carrying you out brought me in, I asked counsel of God. His answer you have inclosed." The inclosure was a slip of paper with this sentence: "Let him return to London." Whitefield resorted to prayer. The story of the prophet in the book of Kings came forcibly to his recollection—how he turned back from his appointed course because another prophet told him it was the will of the Lord that he should do so, and for that reason a lion met him by the way and slew him. So he proceeded on his voyage.\*

A new power has been developed in this Oxford Methodist. He has undergone a great change. The departure of Wesley left Whitefield at the head of the Methodist band or Holy Club of the university and left him also trying to establish his own righteousness after the then Methodist style. The last glimpse we had of his experience, he was not behind the best of them in that way. Reading a treatise lent him by Charles Wesley, he found it asserted that true religion is a union of the soul with God, by the Spirit. A ray of divine light, he says, instantaneously darted in upon him, and from that moment he knew he must be a new creature. To use his own words: "Up

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\* Wesley doubting, from his own experience, whether his friend could be so usefully employed in America as in England, had referred the question to lot, and this was the lot which he had drawn. Whitefield afterward rebuked him: "It is plain you had a wrong lot given you here, and justly, because you tempted God in drawing one." He was at that time addicted to the Moravian practice of sortilege, in perplexed anxieties for the right way.

to that time I knew no more that I must be born again than if I had never been born at all." In seeking, however, to attain the peace that passeth all understanding, his vehemence and ardency of character betrayed him into many ill-judged proceedings and ascetic follies.

Whitefield preceded the Wesleys in obtaining the "assurance of faith," which they had sought together so arduously before they parted. But, like them, he passed through an ordeal of agonizing self-conflicts; he followed out many false courses, and exhausted many remedies; and thus seems to have been prepared to guide and comfort others. Whenever he knelt down to pray, he felt great pressure both in soul and body, and often prayed under the weight of it till the sweat dripped from his face. "God only knows," he writes, "how many nights I have lain upon my bed groaning under what I felt." He kept Lent so strictly that, except on Saturdays and Sundays, his only food was coarse bread and sage-tea without sugar. The end of this was that before the termination of forty days he had scarcely strength enough left to creep up-stairs, and was under a physician for many weeks. At the close of the severe illness which he had thus brought on himself, a happy change of mind confirmed his returning health. It may best be related in his own words:

Notwithstanding my fit of sickness continued six or seven weeks, I trust I shall have reason to bless God for it through the endless ages of eternity; for, about the end of the seventh week, after having undergone innumerable buffetings of Satan, and many months' inexpressible trials, by night and by day, under the spirit of bondage, God was pleased at length to remove the heavy load, to enable me to lay hold on his dear Son by a living faith, and by giving me the Spirit of adoption, to seal me, as I humbly hope, even to the day of everlasting redemption. But O with what joy—joy unspeakable, even joy that was full of and big with glory—was my soul filled when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith, broke in upon my disconsolate soul! Surely it was the day of my espousals—a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. At first my joys were like a spring-tide, and, as it were, overflowed the banks. Go where I would I could not avoid singing of psalms almost aloud; afterward they became more settled, and, blessed be God, saving a few casual intervals, have abode and increased in my soul ever since.

The Wesleys at this time were in Georgia; and some person who feared lest the little society which they had formed at Oxford should be broken up and totally dissolved, for want of a superintendent, had written to Sir John Philips, of London, who

was ready to assist in religious works with his purse, and recommended Whitefield as a proper person to be encouraged and patronized, more especially for this purpose. Sir John immediately gave him an annuity of £20, and promised to make it £30 if he would continue at Oxford; for if it could be leavened with the vital spirit of religion, it would be like medicating the waters at their spring. He accepted the situation, and filled it well. His illness rendered it expedient for him to change air, and he went accordingly to his native city where, laying aside all other books, he devoted himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures, reading them upon his knees, and praying over every line and word. The Bishop of Gloucester perceived his talents and earnest spirit, and proffered him ordination, notwithstanding he said that he had resolved to ordain no one under three and twenty years, and Whitefield was only twenty-one.

He prepared himself for the ceremony by fasting and prayer, and spent two hours the previous evening on his knees in the neighboring fields, making supplication for himself and those who were to be ordained with him. At the ordination he consecrated himself to an apostolic life. "I trust," he writes, "I answered to every question from the bottom of my heart, and heartily prayed that God might say, Amen. If my vile heart doth not deceive me, I offered up my whole spirit, soul, and body to the service of God's sanctuary. Let come what will, life or death, depth or height, I shall henceforward live like one who this day, in the presence of men and angels, took the holy sacrament upon the profession of being inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon me that ministration in the Church."

The good bishop gave him five guineas — "a great supply," wrote Whitefield, "for one who had not a guinea in the world." His first sermon revealed at once his extraordinary powers. His journal gives this account: "Last Sunday, in the afternoon, I preached my first sermon in the church where I was baptized, and also first received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Curiosity drew a large congregation together. The sight at first a little awed me. But I was comforted with a heart-felt sense of the Divine presence, and soon found the advantage of having been accustomed to public speaking when a boy at school, and of exhorting and teaching the prisoners and poor people at their private houses, whilst at the university. By these means I was kept from being

daunted overmuch. As I proceeded, I perceived the fire kindled, till at last, though so young, and amidst a crowd of those who knew me in my childish days, I trust I was enabled to speak with some degree of gospel authority."

Some mocked: many were awakened. It was reported to the bishop that fifteen of his hearers had gone mad. He wished that the madness might not pass away before another Sunday. That same week Whitefield returned to Oxford, took his degree, and continued to visit the prisoners, and inspect two or three charity schools which were supported by the Methodists. With this state of life he was contented, and thought of continuing in the university, at least for some years, that he might complete his studies, and do good among the gownsmen—to convert one of them being deemed, by some, as much as converting a parish. From thence, however, he was invited to officiate at the Tower chapel, in London, during the absence of the curate. It was a summons which he obeyed with fear and trembling; but he was soon made sensible of his power; for though the first time he entered a pulpit in the metropolis the congregation seemed disposed to sneer at his youth, they grew serious during his discourse, showed him great tokens of respect as he came down, and blessed him as he passed along, while inquiry was made on every side, from one to another, Who is he?

While he was in London, letters from Ingham and the Wesleys made him long to follow them to Georgia; but when he opened these desires to his friends, they persuaded him that laborers were wanted at home. He now learned that Charles Wesley had come over to procure assistance; and though Charles did not invite him to the undertaking, yet he wrote in terms which made it evident that he was in his thoughts, as a proper person. Soon afterward came a letter from John: "Only Mr. Delamotte is with me," said he, "till God shall stir up the hearts of some of his servants, who, putting their lives in his hands, shall come over and help us, where the harvest is so great and the laborers so few. What if thou art the man, Mr. Whitefield?" In another letter it was said: "Do you ask me what you shall have? Food to eat, and raiment to put on; a house to lay your head in, such as your Lord had not; and a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Upon reading this, his heart leaped within him, and echoed to the call. The desire thus formed soon ripened into

a purpose, and fearing that it would never be carried into effect if he "conferred with flesh and blood," he wrote to his relations at Gloucester, telling them his design, and that if they would promise not to dissuade him, he would visit them to take his leave; otherwise he would embark without seeing them, for he knew his own weakness. But the promise extorted was not strictly observed; his aged mother wept sorely; and others, who had no such cause to justify their interference, represented to him what "preferment" he might have if he would stay at home.\*

Whitefield's leave-takings proved to be great awakenings, especially in Gloucester and Bristol. Crowds attended week-day services such as Sundays had not brought together. His piety was fed with deep meditations, and his eloquence broke upon congregations with wondrous power. "Sometimes, as I have been walking," he says, "my soul would make such sallies that I thought it would go out of the body. At other times I would be so overpowered with a sense of God's infinite majesty that I would be constrained to throw myself prostrate on the ground, and offer my soul as a blank in his hands, to write on it what he pleased."

On his last visit to Bristol people came out on foot to meet him, and some in coaches, a mile without the city. He preached about five times a week. All classes, and all denominations, from Quakers to High-churchmen, flocked to hear him. "The whole city," he wrote, "seemed to be alarmed." "The word was sharper than a two-edged sword, and the doctrine of the new birth made its way like lightning in the hearers' consciences." "Some hung upon the rails of the organ-loft, others climbed upon the leads of the church, and all together made the church so hot with their breath that the steam would fall from the pillars like drops of rain." When he said that perhaps they might see his face no more, high and low, young and old, burst into tears. After the sermon multitudes followed him home weeping. The next day he was employed from seven in the morning till midnight in talking and giving spiritual advice to awakened hearers; and he left Bristol secretly in the middle of the night, to avoid being escorted by horsemen and coaches out of the town.†

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\*The device upon Whitefield's seal was a winged heart soaring above the globe, and the motto, *Astra petamus*. †Memoirs of Rev. Geo. Whitefield, by J. Gillies, D.D.

At Oxford, Whitefield had an agreeable interview with the other Methodists, and came to London about the end of August to prepare for his voyage. The time of his detention was fully employed in the pulpits of the metropolis. When he assisted at the eucharist, the consecration of the elements had to be twice or thrice repeated. The managers of charitable institutions were eager to obtain his services; for that purpose they procured the liberty of the churches on week-days, and thousands went away from the largest churches, not being able to get in. The congregations were all attention, and seemed to hear as for eternity. He preached generally nine times a week, and often helped to administer the sacrament early on the Lord's-day, when the streets might be seen filled with people going to church with lanterns in their hands, and conversing about the things of God.\*

As his popularity increased, opposition began to arise, but he left before it took form. Some of the clergy became angry; two of them told him they would not let him preach in their pulpits any more, unless he renounced that part of the preface of his sermon on "Regeneration" (lately published), wherein he wished "that his brethren would entertain their auditors oftener with discourses upon the new birth."

Wesley was approaching the coast of England while Whitefield was preparing for his embarkation; "and now, when Whitefield, having excited this powerful sensation in London, had departed for Georgia, to the joy of those who dreaded the excesses of his zeal, no sooner had he left the metropolis than Wesley arrived there, to deepen and widen the impression which Whitefield had made. Had their measures been concerted they could not more entirely have accorded."† And Whitefield supplied in America the very element that Wesley's ministry lacked. He was not an organizer; he was not an ecclesiastical legislator; he was preëminently a preacher—a loving, melting, saving preacher. In both hemispheres, but especially in America, starting out from and returning to Georgia in many successive trips, he was to be the evangelist, preparing the way for Methodism.‡ It was appointed him to *preach*; he did not spend his strength in defending the word of God, but in proclaiming it. He drew crowds, and before a crowd of drowsy worldlings had no equal. His figure was tall and his gesture striking. Marvelous things were

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\* Tyerman. † Wesley and Methodism. ‡ Dr. Stevens.

told of the compass and sweetness of his voice.\* His eyes were blue and luminous, though small, and a slight squint in one of them, caused by the measles, is said not to have "lessened the uncommon sweetness" of his countenance. His humble origin enabled him to understand and address the common people, who, while admiring that natural grace which rendered him at home in aristocratic circles, felt that he was one from among themselves. More than all, his soul was on fire. The unction of the Holy One rested on him. An ignorant man returning from hearing him said, "He preached like a lion." In later years, Wesley, listening to him, and observing the effect of his sermon, wrote: "Even the little improprieties, both of his language and manner, were the means of profiting many, who would not have been touched by a more correct discourse, or a more calm and regular manner of preaching."

The ship on which Whitefield sailed was full of soldiers. The captain of the ship and the officers of the regiment, and a young cadet, gave him to understand that they looked upon him as a hypocrite, and for awhile treated him as such. Card-playing and profanity were prevalent, and his reproofs were scoffed at. The voyage was long. He tried what he could do between decks, preaching daily to his red-coat parishioners, as he called them. A fever broke out and went through the ship. The Methodist plan was in place—doing good to the bodies and souls of men—and he followed it. For many days and nights he visited between twenty and thirty sick persons—crawling between decks—administering medicines or cordials to them, and such advice as seemed suitable to their circumstances. One day he said to the military captain that "though he was a volunteer on board, yet, as he was on board, he looked upon himself as his chaplain, and as such he thought it a little odd to pray and preach to the servants and not to the master;" and added that "if he thought proper he would make use of a short collect now and then to him and the other gentlemen in the great cabin." After pausing awhile and shaking his head, he answered, "I think we may when we have nothing else to do." †

Before the voyage was through, the two captains were quite

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\* Garrick, with allowable exaggeration, said Whitefield could make his hearers weep or shout with exultation, merely by his varied pronunciation of the word *Mesopotamia*. † Memoirs of Whitefield, by Gillies.



brought over. Captain Mackay desired that Mr. Whitefield would not give himself the trouble of expounding and praying in the cabin and between decks, for he would order a drum to beat morning and evening, and he himself would attend with the soldiers on the deck. This produced a very agreeable alternation—they were now as regular as in a church. Whitefield preached with a captain on each side of him, and soldiers all around; and the two other ships' companies, being now in the trade-winds, drew near and joined in the worship of God. The great cabin now became a *Bethel*; both captains were daily more and more affected—a crucified Saviour and the things pertaining to the kingdom of God were the usual topics of their conversation. Once, after sermon, Captain Mackay desired the soldiers to stop, whilst he informed them that to his great shame he had been a notorious swearer, but by the instrumentality of Mr. Whitefield's preaching he had now left it off, and exhorted them, for Christ's sake, to go and do likewise. The effect may be imagined.

There was a reformation throughout the whole soldiery. The women cried, "What a change in our captain!" The bad books and packs of cards which Whitefield exchanged for Bibles and other religious books (abundance of which were given him to dispense by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) were thrown overboard. The cadet, who was a cabin-passenger, being "wounded deeply," told Mr. Whitefield the history of his life, and informed the captain of his desire to leave the army, and return to his original intention of devoting himself to the ministry. The soldiers stood forth of evenings and submitted like children to being catechised on the exposition of the morning lesson.

They landed the beginning of May, 1738. After preaching a farewell sermon to his converts on the sea and his red-coat parishioners, Whitefield arrived at Savannah on the seventh, and entered upon his "little foreign cure."

Whitefield soon found he had no mission to the Indians; the romance about these "children of nature" disappeared on sight of the situation. Of the unkindness done to Wesley he heard, but did not embroil himself in the strife. His manner and spirit opened his way to all the colonists. He contracted an intimacy with the Saltzburg pastor, Bolzius, whom his predecessor had

repelled from the sacrament because he had not been baptized by an episcopally ordained minister. He writes:

Through Divine mercy, I met with respectful treatment from magistrates, officers, and people. The first I visited now and then; the others, besides preaching twice a day and four times on the Lord's-day, I visited from house to house. I was in general most cordially received, but from time to time found that *cælum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt*. [People do not change their disposition by crossing the sea.] Among some of these, the event, however, proved that the word took effectual root. I was really happy in my little foreign cure, and could have cheerfully remained among them had I not been obliged to return to England, to receive priest's orders and make a beginning toward laying a foundation to the Orphan-house.

He found many orphan children among the colonists, and projected an asylum for them. Their condition was peculiarly helpless and their number likely to increase. The scheme of Professor Franke, of Germany, was in his mind as a model; but the differences between old and thickly-settled Halle and Savannah were not taken into account. A more practical man would call the plan a bad one, both in location and operation; but if it did little good to the orphans, it did a great deal of good to the Church and to the world. It helped to secure the perpetual itinerancy of Whitefield. He was kept going the rest of his life, to build and then to support the orphanage; and as he went, he preached; and the results of his preaching can never die. The benevolent but ill-judged scheme was one of those mysterious burdens which Providence sometimes allows good men to take up, who move steadier and go faster for the load they carry. The ideal is noble and elevating, but its benefits are in the contemplation rather than in the realization. He ranged from north to south along our coast, and thirteen times crossed the Atlantic, pleading for his Bethesda. The Savannah orphanage on one continent and the London Tabernacle on the other were the focal points of a wide movement, and made him the almoner and the evangelist of the English-speaking world.

Parting affectionately with his flock, Whitefield embarked at Charleston, September 6, 1738, and returned to England in time to inaugurate that important economic measure of Methodism—field-preaching.

## CHAPTER IX.

Wesley's Experience; His Reflections—Peter Böhler: His Doctrine and Life—  
Conversion of the Two Brothers: Effect Upon Their Ministry.

ON his arrival in London (Feb. 3, 1738), and without delay, John Wesley visited Oglethorpe, and waited upon the Georgian trustees; gave to them a written account why he had left the colony, and returned to them the instrument whereby they had appointed him minister of Savannah. While on his way to England, upon the bosom of the great deep, his "mind was full of thought," and in the fullness of his heart he made the following entry in his private journal: "I went to America to convert the Indians; but O who shall convert me? who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well—nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say, 'To die is gain.'

I have a sin of fear that, when I've spun  
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore.

I think, verily, if the gospel be true, I am safe; for I not only have given, and do give, all my goods to feed the poor; I not only give my body to be burned, drowned, or whatever God shall appoint for me; but I follow after charity (though not as I ought, yet as I can), if haply I may attain it. I *now* believe the gospel is true. I show my faith by my works, by staking my all upon it. I would do so again and again a thousand times, if the choice were still to make. Whoever sees me sees I would be a Christian."

By the most infallible of proofs, he tells us—that of his own consciousness—he was convinced of his having "no such faith in Christ" as prevented his heart from being troubled; and he earnestly prays to be "saved by such a faith as implies peace in life and death." He did not apprehend the promise, "A new heart also will I *give* you." To attain to a state of entire sanctification was with him the great business of life; he aimed at a high standard of personal holiness; but in the process of this work, his references to the grace of the Holy Spirit were rather

casual and indirect than indicative of an entire dependence upon his presence and agency. A few days afterward, standing again on English soil, he makes in his journal this record of his inward struggles, this estimate of his spiritual condition.

It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgia Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why (what I the least of all suspected), that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God. "I am not mad," though I thus speak, but "I speak the words of truth and soberness;" if haply some of those who still dream may awake and see that as I am so are they. Are they read in philosophy? So was I. In ancient or modern tongues? So was I also. Are they versed in the science of divinity? I too have studied it many years. Can they talk fluently upon spiritual things? The very same could I do. Are they plenteous in alms? Behold, I give all my goods to feed the poor. Do they give of their labor as well as of their substance? I have labored more abundantly than they all. Are they willing to suffer for their brethren? I have thrown up my friends, reputation, ease, country; I have put my life in my hand, wandering into strange lands; I have given my body to be devoured by the deep, parched up with heat, consumed by toil and weariness, or whatsoever God should please to bring upon me. But does all this (be it more or less, it matters not) make me acceptable to God? Does all I ever did or can know, say, give, do, or suffer, justify me in his sight? Yea, or the constant use of all the means of grace (which, nevertheless, is meet, right, and our bounden duty)? Or that I know nothing of myself; that I am, as touching outward, moral righteousness, blameless? Or (to come closer yet) the having a rational conviction of all the truths of Christianity? Does all this give me a claim to the holy, heavenly, divine character of a Christian? By no means. If the oracles of God are true, if we are still to abide by "the law and the testimony," all these things, though when ennobled by faith in Christ they are holy, and just, and good, yet without it are "dung and dross," meet only to be purged away by "the fire that never shall be quenched." This, then, have I learned in the ends of the earth—that I "am fallen short of the glory of God;" that my whole heart is "altogether corrupt and abominable," and, consequently, my whole life (seeing it cannot be that an "evil tree" should "bring forth good fruit"); that "alienated" as I am from the life of God, I am "a child of wrath," an heir of hell; that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making any atonement for the least of those sins which "are more in number than the hairs of my head," that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they cannot abide his righteous judgment; that "having the sentence of death" in my heart, and having nothing in or of myself to plead, I have no hope but that of being justified freely "through the redemption that is in Jesus;" I have no hope but that if I seek I shall find Christ, and "be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

If it be said that I have faith (for many such things have I heard from many miserable comforters), I answer, So have the devils—a sort of faith—but still they are strangers to the covenant of promise. So the apostles had even at Cana in

Galilee, when Jesus first "manifested forth his glory;" even then they in a sort "believed on him," but they had not then "the faith that overcometh the world." The faith I want is "a sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favor of God." I want that faith which St. Paul recommends to all the world, especially in his Epistle to the Romans—that faith which enables every one that hath it to cry out: "I live not, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." I want that faith which none can have without knowing that he hath it (though many imagine they have it who have it not); for whosoever hath it is "freed from sin," the whole "body of sin is destroyed" in him; he is freed from fear, "having peace with God through Christ, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." And he is freed from doubt, "having the love of God shed abroad in his heart through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him;" which "Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God."

Wesley had been in the Christian ministry for twelve or thirteen years, and having tried legalism and ritualism to the utmost, he found no health in them. He is now ready to be "taught the way of the Lord more perfectly;" and the Lord has prepared a teacher. At the very time when, harassed by persecution and perplexed as to the state of his heart, he resolved to return to his native land, the heads of the Moravian Church in Germany were making arrangements to send a pious and gifted evangelist to America, directing him to pass through England. Little did they imagine what consequences would arise out of the fulfillment of their plans. The hand of God was in it. The man selected for this service was Peter Böhler, who arrived in London just in time to impart the evangelical instruction which Wesley and his brother so greatly needed. The sons of the Anglican Church applied to the son of the Moravian: "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out."

More than three hundred years had passed since the Council of Constance had burned at the stake the two noblest men of Bohemian history—Jerome and Huss. For a long time the people of Moravia and Bohemia had held principles that, in Luther's time, became Protestantism. John Huss and Jerome of Prague (martyred in 1415) were reformers before the Reformation. The latter, after leaving the University of Prague, visited Oxford, and imbibed Wycliffe's principles while copying his works. This ante-Lutheran reformation, though repressed by vigilant and cruel persecutions, was not extinguished. Many families lingered in Bohemia and Moravia from generation to generation,

retaining, in humble obscurity, the truth for which the Constance martyrs had died. The papal persecutors deemed that in destroying Jerome and Huss they had extinguished the new movement on the continent of Europe; "but a spark from the stake of Constance lighted up at last the flame of Methodism in England and America."

The formal organization of *Unitas Fratrum*, or Unity of the Brethren (as the Moravian Church calls itself), may be dated in 1467, when their Society became an independent Church, and their ministry was instituted—the Waldensian Bishop, Stephen, consecrating to the episcopal office three men who had been sent to him for that purpose by the Moravian Conference or Synod. Toward the close of the fifteenth century, a Bohemian version of the Bible was published. In the sixteenth century, they sent several deputations to Luther, but were deterred from joining the Lutheran or Calvinistic Churches because of the civil entanglements and worldly elements connected with them. At their last interview the great reformer bid them Godspeed, and took leave of them in these words: "Do you be the apostles of the Bohemians, as I and my brethren will be apostles of the Germans." In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the prosperity of the Brethren was at its highest. The *Unitas Fratrum* was composed of three provinces—the Moravian, the Bohemian, and the Polish—each governed by its own bishops and conferences, but all confederated as one Church, holding General Conferences in common. Then began persecutions more vigorous than ever before known. The *Unitas Fratrum*, as a recognized organization, disappeared from the eyes of the world, and remained as a "hidden seed" for nearly a century. In Moravia many families secretly maintained the views of their fathers. Among these a religious awakening took place in the first quarter of the eighteenth century under Christian David's preaching, which was followed by the usual persecutions; and several Moravians escaped from their native country with David, and found refuge at Berthelsdorf, an estate in Saxony belonging to Count Zinzendorf. This pious nobleman kindly received them, and other Moravians soon joined them. They built a town, and called it Herrnhut; introduced the discipline and perpetuated the ministry of *Unitas Fratrum*, and in this way the ancient Church was "RENEWED."

Christian David, an earnest-minded carpenter, led the little company to a piece of land near a mound (the Hutberg or Watch-hill), where, lifting his ax, he cleaved a tree, exclaiming: "Here hath the sparrow found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts!" In June, 1722, the first tree was cut down; in October, the exiles entered their new home. "The renewed Church of the Brethren" dates from the foundation of Herrnhut, and in 1732 the infant community, then numbering about six hundred members, first essayed to fulfill the final charge of our ascending Lord by sending out its messengers to the distant nations of the earth.\* Most of them poor and destitute exiles, this feeble band of heroic men sent out, during the short period of nine or ten years, missionaries to Greenland, to the West Indies, to the Indians of North America, to Lapland, to Tartary, to Algiers, to Guinea, to the Cape of Good Hope, and to the Island of Ceylon. Having been nearly extinguished in

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\*The "Brethren," both in America and in Europe, never increased as did many other denominations of Christians. The fundamental principle underlying the efforts of Zinzendorf and his coadjutors, on behalf of the Church at home, was Spener's idea of *ecclesiolæ in ecclesia*—little churches within the Church—households of faith whose members should be separated as much as possible from the world, and which should constitute retreats where men could hold undisturbed communion with God. This idea, begun at Herrnhut, resulted in the establishment of Moravian settlements—that is, towns founded by the Church, where no one who is not a member was permitted to own real estate, although strangers, complying with the rules of the community, were allowed to lease houses. A system so exclusive kept the Church small, although it was of great advantage in other respects, and served to foster the missionary zeal which has distinguished the Moravians. The last General Synod, held at Herrnhut in 1857, remodeled the constitution, and opened the way for a more general development of the resources of the Church in the home field. The *Unitas Fratrum* now consists of three provinces—the American, Continental, and British—which govern themselves in all provincial matters, but are confederated as one Church in respect to general principles of doctrine and practice, and the prosecution of the foreign mission work. Each province has a Synod. For the general government of the three provinces and the foreign missions there is a General Synod, which meets every ten or twelve years, and to which each province sends the same number of delegates. The executive board of the General Synod is called the "Unity's Elders' Conference," and is the highest judicatory for the whole *Unitas Fratrum*, when that Synod is not in session. In the American province there are two districts. The seat of government for the Northern District is at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; and for the Southern, at Salem, North Carolina. The home Church in 1860 numbered 19,633 members, while there were 312 missionaries in the foreign field (not counting native assistants), and 74,538 converts.—*Appleton's Cyclopaedia*.

the persecutions of the seventeenth century, they took measures, by planting their Church in many lands, that defied general suppression for the future.

Zinzendorf, a Lutheran, was converted to the faith of his exile-guests, relinquished all worldly honors, became a bishop of the "Brethren," and devoted his life and estate to their service. His first episcopal act was to ordain Peter Böhler (Dec. 16, 1737) as pastor of the infant church at Savannah and evangelist to the negroes of Carolina, with official instructions to visit Oxford, on his way to the distant field of labor.

Peter Böhler was born at Frankfort, 1712. He was educated in the University of Jena, where he also studied theology. When sixteen years of age, he joined the Moravians. His boyhood, though not unchecked by the monitions of conscience, nor destitute of vigorous efforts after a purer morality, was wild and wicked. Böhler's associates at Frankfort were not helpful to him, either in intellectual pursuits or the discipline of the heart. He speaks of them as "his gormandizing, tippling, and fighting countrymen." Several members of the roystering band having been recently transferred to Jena, his spiritual danger was extreme. Happily, a pious student, afterward a bishop, who had come to Jena a few days before the arrival of his friend, was so disgusted with the state of morals that he had sought refuge with the "Brethren;" and when Böhler reached the post-house, at one in the morning, he found Baumeister in attendance, to conduct him to the house where their religious meetings were held. Böhler, without any definite purpose, followed him to the place; and when in the early morning he was assailed by the importunities of the godless party, who besought him to leave the persecuted pietists, he was deaf to their entreaties and their taunts, and felt as though "restrained by an invisible hand."

One day Böhler attended a meeting held by Spangenberg, then a professor in the university, in which he commented on a pamphlet of Spener's. A sentence expressive of the Saviour's power to free from all sin caught the ear of Böhler. The effect was instantaneous. "I have tried every thing in the world excepting this!" exclaimed the conscience-stricken student; "but this I will try." Retiring to the house of the pious deacon, where he had secured lodgings, and found a welcome retreat from the scoffs and profanity of the witlings and skeptics who unhappily



abounded, he resolved to seek the blessing of forgiveness in the evangelical mode of which Spangenberg had been the faithful expositor. After combating a perilous temptation to procrastinate, he, on the following Saturday, cast himself, in the spirit of genuine penitence, at the Saviour's feet; and, while engaged in secret prayer, he was enabled to believe upon the Son of God, and immediately realized the peace and joy he had so long and so earnestly desired.

His conversion produced the legitimate effects. The witness of the Spirit was his joyful experience; the New Testament was his favorite study, and furnished him weapons of defense against scoffers. From various causes the number of the "associated students" had been reduced to nine; and at their request Zinzendorf appeared, to reorganize the little band. It was during the visit of the Count to Jena in 1732 that the life-long attachment between him and Böhler was formed. Between the two a most sacred vow was made that they would be true to the cause and service of their common Lord even to the death.

By the direction of his father he removed to Leipsic—perhaps to escape "enthusiasm;" but his residence at Leipsic was brief; and from causes which do not appear, he shortly returned to Jena. Here his influence in promoting spiritual good was extensive and powerful. The little band of nine increased to one hundred, of whom more than half joined the Moravian Church. Many of these reappear as evangelists and pastors in distant lands.

On recovering from an attack of fever, Böhler paid his first visit to Herrnhut; and, while preaching "with a warm and melted heart," Schullius Richter, whom we shall meet in Georgia, was led to the Saviour. Taking leave of his Jena friends in a love-feast, attended by many to whom he had been the instrument of salvation, and followed by their prayers and tears, Böhler set out for London, where he arrived early in February, 1738, accompanied by two of his brethren. On the day of his arrival, John Wesley delivered to him a letter addressed to Zinzendorf, from John Toltschig, a Moravian minister, whose acquaintance Wesley had formed in Savannah.

Wesley's journal notices the event:

February 7th. A day much to be remembered. At the house of Mr. Weinantz, a Dutch merchant, I met Peter Böhler, Schullius Richter, and Wensel Neiser, just then landed from Germany. Finding they had no acquaintance in England,

I offered to procure for them a lodging, and did so, near Mr. Hutton's, where I then was. And from this time I did not willingly lose any opportunity of conversing with them while I staid in London.

Peter Böhler did not finally leave London till the beginning of May; and during this interval he was very active in his efforts to do good. Many were awakened and not a few converted under his plain and scriptural teaching. His instrumentality in bringing the Wesleys to right views and sound experience may be seen by a few notices from his private papers, and brief extracts from the journals of the two brothers—both of whom being in the same condition, Böhler's counsel was as applicable to the one as to the other. Doubtless, the nature of the faith by means of which the penitent sinner receives justification, and which is followed by the assurance of the Divine favor—that faith which Böhler had exercised in his private room at Jena, but which the Wesleys had not yet put forth—formed the central topic of discourse.\*

Charles became Böhler's teacher in English; but meantime conversation was not restrained with the foreigner. John spoke German, and the two brothers, for five or six years, had been accustomed to converse in Latin when by themselves, and here Böhler was at home. What transpired between the 7th and 17th of February is at best matter of conjecture; but on the latter day the two brothers and their German friend proceeded by coach to Oxford. The reproach which had been formerly endured, now revived; and even as they walked through the squares of the colleges, they became the occasion of derisive laughter. Böhler, perceiving that Wesley was troubled chiefly for his sake, said, with a smile, "*Mi frater, non adhæret vestibus.*" [My brother, it does not even stick to our clothes.]

"All this time," observes John Wesley, "I conversed much with Peter Böhler; but I understood him not, and least of all when he said, '*Mi frater, mi frater, excoquenda est ista tua philosophia.*'" [My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away.] During the journey, Böhler's mind had been painfully exercised. He writes to Zinzendorf: "I traveled with the two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, from London to Oxford. The elder, John, is a good-natured man; he knew he

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\*Memorials of the Life of Peter Böhler, by Rev. J. P. Lockwood; with an introduction by Rev. Thos. Jackson. London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1863

did not properly believe on the Saviour, and was willing to be taught. His brother is at present very much distressed in his mind, but does not know how he shall begin to be acquainted with the Saviour. Our mode of believing in the Saviour is so easy to Englishmen that they cannot reconcile themselves to it; if it were a little more artful, they would sooner find their way into it."

Böhler's powers of conversation were attractive. Escorted by a graduate, he proceeded to examine the university library; and after spending half an hour amidst its literary treasures, he addressed his learned companion in the Latin tongue, and kept him spell-bound for two hours, as he discoursed on "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Blessings attended his interpreted discourses both in London and Oxford, and a work was begun, says Wesley, "such as will never come to an end, till heaven and earth pass away." In his instructions to visit the ancient seat of learning, we recognize the guidance of "Him who holdeth the seven stars in his right-hand," who has made the spiritual interests of his Church the object of his ceaseless care, and whose prerogative it is to select, prepare, and bless the agents employed for its revival and prosperity.

John returned to preach in London and to visit his mother, leaving his brother both tutor and pupil to the German evangelist. Charles records in his journal, under February 22: "I had some close conversation with Peter Böhler. He talked much of the necessity of prayer and faith." A few days afterward, the bard of Methodism was nigh unto death from pleurisy. Böhler was at his bedside. The journal continues:

I asked him to pray for me. He seemed unwilling at first; but beginning very faintly, he raised his voice by degrees, and prayed for my recovery with a strange confidence. He asked me, "Do you hope to be saved?" "Yes." "For what reason do you hope it?" "Because I have used my best endeavors to serve God." He shook his head, and said no more. I thought him very uncharitable, saying in my heart: "What, are not my endeavors a sufficient ground of hope? Would he rob me of my endeavors? I have nothing else to trust to."

John's journal says: "Thursday morning, March 2d, a message that my brother Charles was dying at Oxford obliged me to set out for that place immediately." He reached the lodgings of his afflicted brother on Saturday, March 4th, and writes: "I found my brother at Oxford, recovering from his pleurisy; and with him Peter Böhler—by whom, in the hands of the great God, I

was on Sunday, the 5th, clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of faith whereby alone we can be saved."

From Böhler we learn that the event so fraught with future blessings occurred during a quiet evening walk. "I took a walk with the elder Wesley, and asked him about his spiritual state."

Good seed having been sown among students and citizens in Oxford, the work is resumed in London. On Thursday, March 23d, Wesley wrote thus in his journal: "I met Peter again, who now amazed me more and more by the accounts he gave of the fruits of living faith—the holiness and happiness which he affirmed to attend it. The next morning I began the Greek Testament again, resolving to abide by 'the law and the testimony,' and being confident that God would hereby show me whether this doctrine was of God." On the first of the following April, we read in his journal: "Being at Mr. Fox's society, my heart was so full that I could not confine myself to the forms of prayer which we were accustomed to use there. Neither do I purpose to be confined to them any more, but to pray indifferently, with a form or without, as may be suitable to particular occasions."

The next day, being the Sabbath, he speaks of his ministerial labors, and adds: "I see the promise; but it is afar off." April 22d, another interview occurred; and the journals of Wesley and of Böhler are mutually illustrative and suggestive. "I met Peter Böhler once more," writes Wesley. "I had now no objection to what he said of the nature of faith—namely, that it is (to use the words of our Church) 'a sure trust and confidence which a man hath, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God.' Neither could I deny either the happiness or holiness which he described as 'the fruits of living faith.' But I could not comprehend what he spoke of an instantaneous work. I could not understand how this faith should be given in a moment; how a man could at once be thus turned from darkness to light, from sin and misery to righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost. I searched the Scriptures again, touching this very thing, particularly the Acts of the Apostles, but, to my utter astonishment, found scarce any instances there of other than instantaneous conversions—scarce any so slow as that of St. Paul, who was three days in the pangs of the new birth. I had but one retreat left, namely: 'Thus, I grant, God wrought in the first ages of Christianity; but the

times are changed. What reason have I to believe he works in the same manner now?' But on Sunday, 23d, I was beat out of this retreat too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses, who testified God had so wrought in themselves, giving them, in a moment, such a faith in the blood of his Son as translated them out of darkness into light, and from sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, 'Lord, help thou my unbelief!'"

"I took," says Peter Böhler, "four of my English brethren to John Wesley, that they might relate their experience to him, how the Saviour so soon and so mightily has compassion, and accepts the sinner. They told, one after another, what had been wrought in them; Wolff, especially, in whom the change was quite recent, spoke very heartily, mightily, and in confidence of his faith. John Wesley and those that were with him were as if thunder-struck at these narrations. I asked him what he then believed. He said four examples were not enough to prove the thing. To satisfy his objections, I replied I would bring eight more here in London. After a short time he stood up and said: 'We will sing that hymn, *Hier legt mein Sinn sich vor dir nieder.*'" \*

My soul before thee prostrate lies,  
To thee, her source, my spirit flies;  
My wants I mourn, my chains I see;  
O let thy presence set me free!

Böhler continues: "During the singing of the Moravian version, he often wiped his eyes. Immediately after, he took me alone into his own room and declared 'that he was now satisfied of what I said of faith, and he would not question any more about it; that he was clearly convinced of the want of it; but how could he help himself, and how could he obtain such faith? He was a man that had not sinned so grossly as other people.' I replied that it was sin enough that he did not believe on the Saviour; he should not depart from the door of the Saviour until he helped him. He wept heartily and bitterly as I spoke to him on this matter, and insisted that I must pray with him."

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\*The original was composed by a pious physician, well read in theology, and connected with the Orphan-house at Halle at the time of Francke. He, along with his brother, prepared the drugs which were known as the "medicines of Halle," which being in great repute, tended not a little to defray the expenses of the institution. The above version is that of Wesley, 1739.—*Lockwood.*

Wesley had not attained the blessing for which he so earnestly sought: now he had clearer views. He began to declare that doctrine of faith which he has been taught. For in answer to his question whether he ought not to leave off preaching, Böhler replied: "Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach it." He was also much confirmed in the truth by hearing the experience of Mr. Hutchins, of Pembroke College, and Mrs. Fox—"two living witnesses," he says, "that God can at least, if he does not always, give that faith whereof cometh salvation, in a moment, as lightning falling from heaven."

Blendon, the spacious residence of the Delamotte family, was no stranger to Methodist visitors. John and Charles Wesley, and Broughton if no others, were there April 25. Charles's journal says: "We sang, and fell into a dispute whether conversion was gradual or instantaneous. My brother was very positive for the latter, and very shocking; mentioned some late instances of gross sinners believing in a moment. I was much offended at his worse than unedifying discourse, and insisted a man need not know when first he had faith. His obstinacy in favoring the contrary opinion drove me at last out of the room. After dinner, I read the Life of Mr. Haliburton; one instance, but only one, of instantaneous conversion." Three days later, he is at his London lodgings, dangerously ill:

In the morning Dr. Cockburn came to see me; and a better physician—Peter Böhler—whom God had detained in England for my good. He stood by my bedside and prayed over me; that now, at least, I might see the Divine intention in this and my late illness. I immediately thought it might be that I should again consider Böhler's doctrine of faith; examine myself *whether I was in the faith*; and if I was not, never cease seeking and longing after it till I attained it.

Wesley returned to Oxford, Böhler walking with him a few miles; but he was hastily recalled by tidings of his brother's relapse, on whose spiritual condition he expresses himself thus:

May 1st The return of my brother's illness obliged me again to hasten to London. In the evening I found him better, as to his health, than I expected; but strongly averse from what he called "the new faith."

But after the interval of a single day this entry is found:

May 3d. My brother had a long and particular conversation with Peter Böhler. And it now pleased God to open his eyes, so that he also saw clearly what was the nature of that one true, living faith, whereby alone "through grace we are saved."

Having fulfilled his brief mission in England, Böhler embarked for America, May 4, leaving the Wesleys hungering and thirsting for the righteousness of faith. In a short time Charles found peace with God, as he lay on the bed of sickness. As he was the first of the brothers who received the name of Methodist, so was he the first to learn by experience the saving truth which Methodism was destined to witness to the world. During this interval he was visited by several persons, of whom some had obtained "the pearl of great price," and others were pressing hard after it; for a spirit of inquiry on the subject of religion was then extensively excited, partly by the recent preaching of Whitefield, partly by the private labors of Böhler, and partly by the preaching of John Wesley, who was admitted into several of the London pulpits, and was followed by immense crowds of people. A special interest attached to him as a returned missionary whose journal had been read, as well as a preacher of strong, if not strange, doctrines.

As an illustration of the manner in which Charles Wesley waited upon God for the gift of faith, and of the salvation connected with it, the following selections from his journal are given:

May 12th. I waked in the same blessed temper, hungry and thirsty after God. I began Isaiah, and seemed to see that to me were the promises made, and would be fulfilled; for that Christ loved me. I found myself more desirous, more assured, I should believe. This day (and indeed my whole time) I spent in discoursing on faith, either with those that had it, or those that sought it; in reading the Scriptures, and in prayer. At night my brother came, exceeding heavy. I forced him (as he had often forced me) to sing a hymn to Christ; and almost thought he would come while we were singing; assured he would come quickly.

May 14th. The beginning of the day I was heavy, weary, and unable to pray; but the desire soon returned, and I found much comfort both in prayer and in the word—my eyes being opened more and more to discover and lay hold upon the promises. I longed to find Christ, that I might show him to all mankind; that I might praise, that I might love him. Several persons called to-day, and were convinced of unbelief.

May 17th. To-day I first saw Luther on the Galatians. I marveled that we were so soon and so entirely removed from him that called us into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. Who would believe our Church had been founded upon this important article of justification by faith alone? I am astonished I should ever think this a new doctrine, especially while our articles and homilies stand unrepealed, and the key of knowledge is not yet taken away.

May 21st, 1738. I waked in hope and expectation of His coming. At nine my brother and some friends came and sang a hymn to the Holy Ghost. My comfort and hope were hereby increased. In about half an hour they went. I betook

myself to prayer, the substance as follows: O Jesus, thou hast said, "I will come unto you;" thou hast said, "I will send the Comforter unto you;" thou hast said, "My Father and I will come unto you and make our abode with you." Thou art God, who canst not lie. I wholly rely upon thy most true promise. Accomplish it in thy time and manner.

While a pious mechanic who nursed him\* was reading the thirty-second Psalm—"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile"—he says: "The Spirit of God strove with my own, and the evil spirit, till by degrees he chased away the darkness of my unbelief. I found myself convinced, I knew not how nor when; and immediately fell to intercession. I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ. My temper for the rest of the day was mistrust of my own great but unknown weakness."

"To use his own expressive language," says Thomas Jackson, "he held the Saviour with a trembling hand; but by prayer, spiritual conversation, and the practical study of the inspired volume, his confidence waxed stronger, and his evidence of the Divine favor became increasingly distinct and vivid." †

When John Wesley left the sick-bed of his brother that morning, he went to one of the churches in London and assisted in the administration of the Lord's Supper. "On leaving the church," says he, "I received the surprising news that my brother had found rest to his soul. His bodily strength returned also from that hour. 'Who is so great a God as our God?'"

John Wesley was still a mourner. His heart was heavy. He was doubtless greatly encouraged by his brother's happy experience. On the day after he had found peace, Charles says: "My brother coming, we joined in intercession for him. In the evening we sang and prayed again." Two more days, and then, on May 24, at five in the morning, Wesley opened his Testament on these words: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nat-

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\* He says, in his journal: "God sent Mr. Bray to me, a poor, ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ; yet, by knowing him, knows and discerns all things." Bray was a happy believer in the Lord Jesus, and was able, from his own personal experience, as well as from the sacred volume, to teach even the accomplished collegian "the way of the Lord more perfectly" than he had hitherto known it. This was May 21st, Whitsunday. † Life of C. Wesley.



ure." On leaving home he opened on the text, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." In the afternoon he went to St. Paul's Cathedral. The anthem was:

Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice.  
 O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint.  
 If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?  
 For there is mercy with thee; therefore shalt thou be feared.  
 O Israel, trust in the Lord for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.  
 And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.

In the evening he went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where a layman was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, describing saving faith. Possessed of it, the heart is "cheered, elevated, and transported with sweet affections toward God." Receiving the Holy Ghost through faith, the man "is renewed and made spiritual," and he is impelled to fulfill the law "by the vital energy in himself." Wesley says:

About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the "law of sin and death." I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, "This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy?" Then was I taught that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation; but that as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsel of his own will. After my return home I was much buffeted with temptations, but cried out and they fled away. They returned again and again: I as often lifted up my eyes, and he sent me help from his holy place. And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving—yea, fighting—with all my might, under the law as well as under grace. But *then* I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; *now* I was always conqueror.

"His experience," says Richard Watson, "nurtured by habitual prayer, and deepened by unwearied exertion in the cause of his Saviour, settled into that steadfast faith and solid peace which the grace of God perfected in him to the close of his long and active life."

Such was the way by which these men, who were to teach others, at length came "into the liberty of the sons of God." But

for the thorns and briars through which they passed; but for the wormwood and the gall they drank, during dreary years, they had not been so well fitted to awaken, to comfort, and to guide others. Being now possessed of the true key to all sound religious experience, and of a power in their ministry which they had never wielded before, the brothers immediately entered upon an energetic course of evangelical labor, calling sinners to repentance, and proclaiming to rich and poor, old and young, men and women of moral habits, and profligate transgressors, including convicts under sentence of death, pardon and peace as "the common salvation," to be obtained by all alike, through faith in the blood of Christ. Others caught the theme and carried on the work.\*

Before the end of the month Charles Wesley's health was so far improved that he was able to go abroad. In consequence of his affliction he was, as yet, unable to address congregations in public; but, like the apostles at Jerusalem, "daily, and in every house," where he could gain access, "he ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." In private companies, where many resorted to him, he read the Scriptures, sang hymns, related his religious experience, and urged upon all the duty and privilege of an immediate application to Christ, in faith for pardon and peace and holiness. The most perfect picture of his feelings and character at this period is that which was drawn years afterward by his own hand: "How happy are they, who their Saviour obey!"

The doctrine of present salvation from sin, by faith in the Lord Jesus, was like fire in his bones. His heart burned with love to Christ, and with zeal for the advancement of his work and glory; his bowels yearned in pity for the souls of unregenerate men, while his faith set at defiance all opposition. Scarcely a day passed but one or more persons were convinced of the truth, and believed to the saving of their souls.

Eighteen days after his conversion (June 11th), John Wesley preached before the University at Oxford that famous sermon on "By grace are ye saved through faith"—henceforth his favorite theme, and the key-note of his ministry.† He describes this faith and its fruits, answers objections, and shows that to preach salvation by faith only is not to preach against holiness

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\* Watson's Life of Wesley. † No. I., in Standard Edition of his Sermons.

and good works. To the rich, the learned, the reputable before him, he makes faithful application:

When no more objections, then we are simply told that salvation by faith only ought not to be preached as the first doctrine, or at least not to be preached to all. But what saith the Holy Ghost? "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ." So, then, that "whosoever believeth on him shall be saved," is, and must be, the foundation of all our preaching; that is, must be preached first. "Well, but not to all." To whom, then, are we not to preach it? Whom shall we except? The poor? Nay; they have a peculiar right to have the gospel preached unto them. The unlearned? No. God hath revealed these things unto unlearned and ignorant men from the beginning. The young? By no means. "Suffer these," in anywise, to come unto Christ, "and forbid them not." The sinners? Least of all. "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Why then, if any, we are to except the rich, the learned, the reputable, the moral men. And it is true, they too often except themselves from hearing; yet we must speak the words of our Lord. For thus the tenor of our commission runs: "Go and preach the gospel to every creature." If any man wrest it, or any part of it, to his destruction, he must bear his own burden. But still, "as the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith unto us, that we will speak."

How could Wesley ever be called a papist, even by foolish enemies, when he preached doctrine so destructive of the Romish delusion?—"At this time more especially will we speak, that 'by grace are ye saved through faith,' because never was the maintaining this doctrine more seasonable than it is at this day. Nothing but this can effectually prevent the increase of the Romish delusion among us. It is endless to attack, one by one, all the errors of that Church. But salvation by faith strikes at the root, and all fall at once where this is established. It was this doctrine, which our Church justly calls *the strong rock and foundation of the Christian religion*, that first drove popery out of these kingdoms; and it is this alone can keep it out. Nothing but this can give a check to that immorality which hath 'overspread the land as a flood.' Can you empty the great deep drop by drop? Then you may reform us by dissuasives from particular vices. But let the 'righteousness which is of God by faith' be brought in, and so shall its proud waves be stayed."

Such was the great doctrine which Wesley began to preach in 1738. It was the preaching of this doctrine that gave birth to the revival of religion—"the religious movement of the eighteenth century"—called Methodism.

## CHAPTER X.

Christian Experience: Its Place in Methodism—The Almost Christian—Wesley's Conversion; His Testimony—The Witness of the Holy Spirit—The Witness of Our Own Spirit—Joint Testimony to Adoption.

IT is not the truth, but the personal apprehension and application of the truth, that saves. The concrete doctrine, as embodied and illustrated in experience, is of at least equal practical importance with the abstract doctrine, as stated in books. Methodism puts emphasis on experience. St. Paul more than once told how he was converted. The subjective aspects of Christianity, as presented in his epistles, are as striking as the objective. Experimental religion is not a cant phrase; it expresses a real and a great fact. It has been well said: Methodism reversed the usual policy of religious sects, which seek to sustain their spiritual life by their orthodoxy; it has sustained its orthodoxy by devoting its chief care to its spiritual life, and for more than a century had no serious outbreaks of heresy, notwithstanding the masses of untrained minds, gathered within its pale, and the general lack of preparatory education among its clergy. No other modern religious body affords a parallel to it in this respect.\*

The doctrine of conscious conversion, and of a direct witness of the Spirit testifying to the heart of the believer that he is a child of God, was the doctrine which exposed the founder of Methodism to the opposition of the formalists of the Church, and the ridicule of the philosophists of the world. His personal experience connects itself with this doctrine. He has made the full disclosure; and according to an eminent authority "it is the only true key to his theological system and to his public ministry."† It would be difficult, he thinks, to fix upon a more interesting and instructive moral spectacle than that which is presented by the progress of his mind, through all its deep and serious agitations, doubts, difficulties, hopes, and fears, from his earliest religious awakenings to the moment when he found that steadfast peace which never afterward forsook him, but gave serenity

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\* Stevens's History of Methodism. † Watson's Life of Wesley.

to his countenance, and cheerfulness to his heart, to the last moment of a prolonged life. This critical passage of Wesleyan biography is thus defended by Watson against the solutions or cavils of men whose treatment of the subject is as unjust to Christianity as to Methodism:

“If the appointed method of man’s salvation, laid down in the gospel, be gratuitous pardon through faith in the merits of Christ’s sacrifice, and if a method of seeking justification by the works of moral obedience to the Divine law be plainly placed by St. Paul in opposition to this, and declared to be vain and fruitless; then, if in this way the Wesleys sought their justification before God, we see how true their own statement must of necessity have been—that, with all their efforts, they could obtain no solid peace of mind, no deliverance from the enslaving fear of death and final punishment, because they sought that by imperfect works which God has appointed to be attained by faith alone. Theirs was not, indeed, a state of heartless formality and self-deluding Pharisæism, aiming only at external obedience. It was just the reverse of this; they were awakened to a sense of danger, and they aimed at—nay, struggled with intense efforts after—universal holiness, inward and outward. But it was not a state of salvation; and if we find a middle state like this described in the Scriptures—a state in transit from dead formality to living faith and moral deliverance—the question, with respect to the truth of their representations as to their former state of experience, is settled.

“Such a middle state we see plainly depicted by the Apostle Paul, in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. There the mind of the person described ‘consents to the law that it is good,’ but finds in it only greater discoveries of his sinfulness and danger; there the effort, too, is after universal holiness—‘to will is present,’ but the power is wanting; every struggle binds the chain tighter; sighs and groans are extorted, till self-despair succeeds, and the true Deliverer is seen and trusted in: ‘O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.’ The deliverance also, in the case described by St. Paul, is marked with the same characters as those exhibited in the conversion of the Wesleys: ‘There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made

me free from the law of sin and death.' 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Every thing in the account of the change wrought in the two brothers, and several of their friends about the same time, answers, therefore, to the New Testament. Nor was their experience, or the doctrine upon which it was founded, new, although in that age of declining piety unhappily not common."

Southey, against whose callous and flippant criticism Watson more especially wrote, thought Wesley's feelings might have been accounted for by referring to "the state of his pulse or stomach." But it does not appear that his health was at all disordered. Fanaticism and enthusiasm are terms in plentiful use. Coleridge, in a marginal note, explains the phenomenon of Wesley's conversion as "a throb of sensibility accompanying a vehement *volition* of acquiescence." The world has not ceased to wonder why Southey—the *ci-devant* Socinian—should write the life of John Wesley. Total want of sympathy for the best parts of his subject "rendered him as incapable of laying down the geography of the moon as of giving the moral portraiture of Wesley." His incompetency for such a task was aptly expressed by one of Wesley's early biographers: "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."\*

That so devout and self-denying a man should be a stranger to the full salvation—only an "almost Christian"—offends the formalist. On May 24, 1738, John Wesley "received such a sense of the forgiveness of sins as till then he never knew." This was his steadfast testimony. The place and the hour—"about a quarter before nine"—he circumstantially and minutely recollects. His testimony is: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*." This must be accepted as the time of his conversion—meaning, by this term, his obtaining the conscious forgiveness of his sins, and the witness of the Holy Ghost to his adoption as a child of God.

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\*Southey purposed making the *amende honorable* in a third edition, for his misconception, and accordingly his misrepresentation, of Wesley, that "the love of power was the ruling passion of his mind;" but this modification of the work was suppressed by his son, a bigoted Churchman, on whom the responsibility of its publication was devolved. See "Smith's History of Wesleyan Methodism," page 635.

In the primary sense of conversion—a turning from sin to God, with some measure of faith—the “good work” seems to have been begun in him before. Referring to the past, he testifies: “During this whole struggle between nature and grace, which had now continued above ten years, I had many remarkable returns to prayer, especially when I was in trouble; I had many sensible comforts, which are indeed no other than short anticipations of the life of faith. But I was still under the law, not under grace—the state most who are called Christians are content to live and die in. For I was only striving with, not freed from, sin; neither had I ‘the witness of the Spirit with my spirit.’”

He had long been a subject of gracious influence; and while writing bitter things against himself and condemning his spiritual state, he had much to be thankful for. Consequently in his later ministry, and in the final revision of his journal, we find certain expressions of a former date guarded and qualified by his own hand.\* Returning from Georgia, he wrote:

It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why (what I the least of all suspected), that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God. (I am not sure of this.)

The concluding parenthesis was added afterward by himself.

Recounting, in the same meditation, what he had done and suffered in the cause of Christ, he said:

Does all this give me a claim to the holy, heavenly, divine character of a Christian? By no means. If the oracles of God are true, if we are still to abide by “the law and the testimony;” all these things, though, when ennobled by faith in Christ,<sup>†</sup> they are holy and just and good, yet without it are “dung and dross.”

This foot-note was subsequently inserted to the last sentence: “<sup>†</sup> I had even then the faith of a *servant*, though not that of a *son*.”

In this searching meditation he expressed a severe opinion:

This, then, have I learned in the ends of the earth—that I “am fallen short of the glory of God;” that my whole heart is “altogether corrupt and abominable;” and, consequently, my whole life (seeing it cannot be that an “evil tree” should “bring forth good fruit”); that “alienated” as I am from “the life of God,” I am “a child of wrath,” an heir of hell.<sup>‡</sup>

The final foot-note is short but expressive: “<sup>‡</sup> I believe not.”

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\* Wesley's Journal: In two volumes. From the latest London edition; with last corrections of the author. New York edition: 1837.

His journal before quoted has described an interview of memorable consequence, which occurred in March of this year:

Saturday, 4. I found my brother at Oxford, recovering from his pleurisy; and with him Peter Böhler; by whom (in the hand of the great God) I was, on Sunday, the 5th, clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of faith whereby alone we are saved. (With the full Christian salvation.)

The concluding parenthesis was added afterward by himself.\*

These last touches to his journal are noteworthy. Without withdrawing Wesley's good confession, they give his maturest views and self-interpretation, in tenderness and charity to those in whom is a spark of grace, or faith as a grain of mustard-seed. He would not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. Against Molther, who held that no man has any degree of saving faith before he has the full assurance, the abiding witness of the Spirit, Wesley maintained the thesis that "There are degrees in faith, and that a man may have some degree of it before all things in him are become new; before he has the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit." None called more loudly and constantly than he, "Let us go on to perfection;" yet none was more tender and careful of the "weak in faith." Five months after his conversion, being asked by his brother Samuel what he meant by being made a Christian, John replied: "By a Christian, I mean one who so believes in Christ as that sin hath no more dominion over him; and in this obvious sense of the word, I was not a Christian till the 24th of May last past. Till then sin had dominion over me, although I fought with it continually; but from that time to this it hath not. Such is the free grace of God in Christ. If you ask me by what means I am made free, I answer, by faith in Christ; by such a sort or degree of faith as I had not till that day."†

Three years later, preaching before the university on "The Almost Christian," ‡ he allows to such a character sincerity and many other excellent qualities—"a real desire to serve God, a

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\* At this period [about the time of their conversion] both the brothers undervalued the grace which they had previously received, and which led them to do and suffer many things for the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind. It is nevertheless undeniable that until they received and exemplified the doctrine of present salvation from the guilt and power of sin by faith in Christ, they had neither of them attained to the true Christian character, as it is described in the apostolical epistles.—*Jackson's Life of C. Wesley*, page 223.

† *Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* ‡ Sermon No. II.



heartly desire to do his will. It is necessarily implied that a man have a sincere view of pleasing God in all things; in all his conversation; in all his actions; in all he does, or leaves undone. This design, if any man be *almost a Christian*, runs through the whole tenor of his life. This is the moving principle, both in his doing good, his abstaining from evil, and his using the ordinances of God." But this is not enough. If any should inquire: "Is it possible that any man living should go so far as this, and, nevertheless, be *only almost a Christian*? What more than this can be implied in the being *a Christian altogether*?"—the preacher boldly meets the question, speaking where his life and conversation had been well known:

"I answer, first, that it is possible to go thus far, and yet be but *almost a Christian*, I learn, not only from the oracles of God, but also from the sure testimony of experience. Brethren, great is 'my boldness toward you in this behalf.' And 'forgive me this wrong,' if I declare my own folly upon the housetop, for yours and the gospel's sake. Suffer me, then, to speak freely of myself, even as of another man. I am content to be abased, so ye may be exalted, and to be yet more vile for the glory of my Lord. I did go thus far for many years, as many of this place can testify; using diligence to eschew all evil, and to have a conscience void of offense; redeeming the time; buying up every opportunity of doing all good to all men; constantly and carefully using all the private means of grace; endeavoring after a steady seriousness of behavior, at all times and in all places; and God is my record, before whom I stand, doing all this in sincerity; having a real design to serve God; a hearty desire to do his will in all things; to please him who had called me to 'fight the good fight,' and to 'lay hold on eternal life.' Yet my own conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost that all this time I was but *almost a Christian*."

After commending to his hearers that "right and true Christian faith"—"a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that, by the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God; whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey his commandments"—the university sermon concludes: "May we all thus experience what it is to be, not almost only, but altogether Christians; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus; knowing we have peace with God through Jesus Christ; rejoicing in hope of the

glory of God; and having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us!"

That the meaning of a foot-note before quoted may be understood—"I had even then the faith of a *servant*, though not of a *son*" ---we give an extract from one of Wesley's sermons:\*

But what is faith which is properly saving, which brings eternal salvation to all those that keep it to the end? It is such a divine conviction of God and the things of God, as, even in its infant state, enables every one that possess it to "fear God and work righteousness." And whosoever, in every nation, believes thus far, the apostle declares, "is accepted of him." He actually is at the very moment in a state of acceptance. But he is at present only a *servant* of God, not properly a *son*. Meantime, let it be well observed that the "wrath of God" no longer "abideth in him."

Indeed, nearly fifty years ago, when the preachers commonly called Methodists began to preach the grand scriptural doctrine, salvation by faith, they were not sufficiently apprised of the difference between a servant and a child of God. They did not clearly understand that even one "who feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." In consequence of this, they were apt to make sad the hearts of those whom God had not made sad. For they frequently asked those who feared God, "Do you know that your sins are forgiven?" And upon their answering "No," immediately replied, "Then you are a child of the devil." No; that does not follow. It might have been said (and it is all that can be said with propriety): "Hitherto you are only a *servant*, you are not a *child*, of God. You have already great reason to praise God that he has called you to his honorable service. Fear not. Continue crying unto him, "And you shall see greater things than these."

And, indeed, unless the servants of God halt by the way, they will receive the adoption of sons. They will receive the *faith* of the children of God, by his *revealing* his only-begotten Son in their hearts. Thus, the faith of a child is, properly and directly, a divine conviction, whereby every child of God is enabled to testify, "The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." And whosoever has this, the Spirit of God witnesseth with his spirit that he is a child of God. So the apostle writes to the Galatians: "Ye are the sons of God by faith. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;" that is, giving you child-like confidence in him, together with a kind affection toward him. This, then, it is that properly constitutes the difference between a servant of God and a child of God. "He that believeth," as a child of God, "hath the witness in himself." This the servant hath not. Yet let no man discourage him; rather, lovingly exhort him to expect it every moment.

From the hour of his adoption as a son, Wesley was another man, and his preaching another preaching. That was the genesis of Methodism. Before, he worked *for* salvation; now, *from* salvation. Before, his word was unfruitful, and his few converts

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\* Sermon CV.: Text, Heb. xi. 6.

fell away without his presence and support; now, his word is spirit and life, and the fruit abides. Before, he sought to save himself; now, to save others. Before, he coveted solitude, and declined the responsibility of two thousand souls at Epworth; now, the world is not too wide for him, nor the care of all the churches too heavy. When the sun passes meridian, there is no noise; but, from that supreme moment, all the shadows fall the other way. Every tree and tower and spire of grass casts its shadow in the opposite direction.

Distinguishable from justification, but closely connected with it, is the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit. To this, Methodism has borne an emphatic testimony. It is not a Wesleyan dogma in the sense of having been discovered by Wesley, or of being exclusively held by Wesleyans; but they magnified it; they claimed it as the privilege of all believers, and they urged all to seek the full salvation. The doctrine of the Trinity is called Athanasian; but Athanasius only formulated what others accepted and what he intensely believed. In all the controversies which arose respecting the religious tenets of the early Methodists, it was invariably maintained that theirs was "the old religion;" "the religion of the primitive Church." With respect to the doctrines which refer to the Divine Being, the great catholic faith of the trinity in unity, and also the fall of man, original sin, the eternal duration of rewards and punishments, and other topics, the Methodists hold opinions in common with all orthodox Churches. Those doctrines which were made the subject of frequent conversation in the early Conferences and of discourse in their sermons, and about which opposition and controversy arose, pertained mainly to experimental religion, and might be characterized not as new, but as neglected or lost sight of.

None were more offended at the Wesleys than their eldest brother. That High-churchman was scandalized at a clergyman preaching to "tatterdemalions on a common," and "never once reading the liturgy." In his anger he went so far as to wish that those "canting fellows," as he called the Moravians, "who talked of *indwellings*, *experiences*, and *getting into Christ*," had never obtained any followers. Late in the year 1738 Samuel Wesley wrote to his mother, complaining of the course of his two brothers, and especially denouncing their doctrine of assur

ance. Her letter in reply so far gratified him and favored his view as to take this ground: "If, upon a serious review of our state, we find that in the tenor of our lives we have or do now sincerely desire and endeavor to perform the conditions of the gospel-covenant required on our parts, then we may discern that the Holy Spirit hath laid in our minds a good foundation of a strong, reasonable, and lively hope of God's mercy through Christ. This is the assurance we ought to aim at, which the apostle calls 'the full assurance of hope.'" Dr. A. Clarke remarks upon this, as proof that her knowledge was "by no means clear and distinct" on the point. In the same letter she says:

You have heard, I suppose, that Mr. Whitefield is taking a progress through these parts to make a collection for a house in Georgia for orphans and such of the natives' children as they will part with to learn our language and religion. He came hither to see me, and we talked about your brothers. I told him I did not like their way of living, wished them in some place of their own, wherein they might regularly preach, etc. He replied: "I could not conceive the good they did in London; that the greatest part of our clergy were asleep, and that there never was a greater need of itinerant preachers than now." I then asked Mr. Whitefield if my sons were not for making some innovations in the Church, which I much feared. He assured me they were so far from it that they endeavored all they could to reconcile Dissenters to our communion.

As soon as she conversed with her sons, and heard them speak for themselves, Mrs. Wesley was convinced that their doctrine was both rational and scriptural; and she waited on their ministry with delight and profit to the end of her life.\*

Six months after his conversion, John Wesley and his brother Charles waited upon Dr. Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, to answer the complaints he had heard against them, to the effect that they preached an absolute assurance of salvation. The two being introduced, Gibson said: "If by assurance you mean an inward persuasion, whereby a man is conscious in himself, after examining his life by the law of God, and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation, and acceptable to God, I don't see how any good Christian can be without such assurance." The Wesleys meant more by "assurance" than this; but the doctrine, so far as it went, was one which they preached. The next point was the charge that they were Antinomians, be-

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\*Samuel's last letter to his mother has this lament and protest: It was with exceeding concern and grief I heard you had countenanced a spreading delusion so far as to be one of Jack's congregation. Is it not enough that I am bereft of both my brothers, but must my mother follow too?"

cause they preached justification by faith only. To this they replied: "Can any one preach otherwise who agrees with our Church and the Scriptures?"

The first few years of Methodism were prolific of anti-Methodist literature. The clergy began to bestir themselves, and the war of pamphlets, expostulatory letters, and books, preceded that of clubs and stones, which followed. Vicars, deans, curates, rectors, chaplains, and bishops issued forth with sermons and pastorals and tractates, abusing the Methodists, and warning the people against them, as "restless deceivers," "babblers," "novices in divinity," "teachers of absurd doctrines," "modern enthusiasts," "solifidians," "papists in disguise;" and things not only false, but monstrously false, are asserted of them. One of the most temperate productions was from a doctor of divinity, a royal chaplain, and preacher to the Honorable Society of Gray's Inn, who published "A Caution against Religious Delusion," in the shape of "a sermon on the New Birth; occasioned by the pretensions of the Methodists." They are charged with "vain and confident boastings," with "gathering tumultuous assemblies to the disturbance of the public peace, and with setting at naught all authority and rule," with "intruding into other men's labors, and encouraging abstinence, prayer, and other religious exercises, to the neglect of the duties of our station." Before the end of the year this sermon reached a sixth edition. Another sermon, on "The Doctrine of Assurance," by the chaplain to his royal highness, Frederick, Prince of Wales (with an appendix), was published (8vo, 39 pages), and had an extensive circulation. The preacher argues that assurance "is given to very few, and perhaps only to such whom God calls either to extraordinary services or to extraordinary sufferings." He further argues that to profess to have received such an assurance savors of spiritual pride, and cannot but produce bad results. The Bishop of London published his "Pastoral Letter to the People of his Diocese; by way of Caution against Lukewarmness on one hand, and Enthusiasm on the other" (55 pages). Two-thirds of this pamphlet are leveled against the Methodists.\* Thirteen days after the "Pastoral Letter" was published, Whitefield wrote an answer to it, and in a firm but respectful way replied to all the bishop's allegations. He concludes by charging Gibson with

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\* The Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley, M.A.

propagating a new gospel, because he asserts that "good works are a *necessary condition* of our being justified in the sight of God." He maintains that *faith* is the only necessary condition, and that *good works* are the necessary fruit and consequence. "This," he writes, "is the doctrine of Jesus Christ; this is the doctrine of the Church of England; and it is because the generality of the clergy of the Church of England do not preach this doctrine that I am resolved, God being my helper, to continue instant in season and out of season, to declare it unto all men, let the consequences as to me privately be what they will."

Without losing time or temper in answering their accusers, the Methodist preachers kept on their way, urging upon small and great not only salvation by faith, but the witness of the Spirit. Susanna Wesley had long been a Christian woman; but this doctrine was one of which she had scarcely ever heard. At the age of seventy, and only three years before her death, she obtained the blessing for herself, and obtained it under the ministry of her son-in-law. Wesley writes:

September 3, 1739. I talked largely with my mother, who told me that, till a short time since, she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as the having God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit; much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers; "therefore," said she, "I never durst ask it for myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing those words, in delivering the cup to me, 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,' the words struck into my heart, and I knew God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven me all my sins." I asked whether her father (Dr. Annesley) had not the same faith, and whether she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered: "He had it himself, and declared a little before his death that for more than forty years he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all, of his being accepted in the Beloved; but that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach—no, not once—explicitly upon it; whence she supposed he also looked upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few, not as promised to all the people of God."\*

As taught by the founder of Methodism, the witness of the

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\*In confirmation is the following from a sermon published by Dr. Annesley, in 1661: "There are believers of several growths in the Church of God: fathers, young men, children, and babes; and as in most families there are more babes and children than grown men, so in the Church of God there are more weak, doubting Christians than strong ones, grown up to a full assurance. A babe may be born and yet not know it; so a man may be born again and not be sure of it. Sometimes they think they have grounds of hope that they shall be saved; sometimes they think they have grounds of fear that they shall be condemned. Not knowing which might be most weighty, like a pair of balances, they are in equipoise."

Spirit was not the assurance of *eternal* salvation, as held by Calvinistic divines, but the assurance given by the Holy Spirit to penitent and believing persons that they are “*now* accepted of God, pardoned, and adopted into God’s family.” It was a doctrine, therefore, which invited to no relaxation of religious effort, and no irregularity of life; for, as the person who is now justified was once condemned, so, by falling into sin and unbelief, he may in future come again into condemnation. And further, as this justification, with its evidence, may be forfeited, so it may be recovered; “our backslidings” may be “healed,” and the favor of God be again restored. Few divines, says Richard Watson, have ever denied the possibility of our becoming assured of the favor of God in a sufficient degree to give substantial comfort to the mind; since the more sincere and earnest a person is in the affair of his salvation, the more miserable he must be if there be no possibility of his being assured that the wrath of God no longer abideth upon him. “Their differences have rather respected the *means* by which the contrite become assured of that change in their relation to Almighty God, whom they have offended, which in Scripture is expressed by the term justification.” The question has been, By what means is the assurance of Divine favor conveyed to the mind? Some have concluded that we obtain it by inference only; others, by the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit to the mind. Wesley held that both direct and indirect testimony were the privilege of believers. His most used and favorite text is: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom. viii. 16);\* on which he remarks:

None who believe the Scriptures to be the word of God can doubt the importance of such a truth as this—a truth revealed therein not once only, not obscurely, not incidentally, but frequently, and that in express terms; but solemnly, and of set purpose, as denoting one of the peculiar privileges of the children of God. It more nearly concerns the Methodists, so called, clearly to understand, explain, and defend this doctrine, because it is one grand part of the testimony which God has given them to bear to all mankind. It is by his peculiar blessing upon them in searching the Scriptures, confirmed by the experience of his children, that this great evangelical truth has been recovered, which had been for many years well-nigh lost and forgotten.

Proceeding to expound “this joint testimony”† to the great fact that “we are the children of God,” he shows what is this

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\*Sermons X., XI., XII. † Note the Greek verb *συνμαρτυρεῖ*.

witness or testimony of our spirit, and what is the testimony of God's Spirit. The foundation of the former is laid in those numerous texts of Scripture which describe the marks of the children of God. One may reason thus: First, the Scriptures say, by St. Paul, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God," into all holy tempers and actions, "they are the sons of God." Secondly, I am thus "led by the Spirit of God." Thirdly, he easily concludes, "therefore I am a son of God." Again, by St. John: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." One examining himself says: I love Christians because they are Christians; I love the brethren; therefore, I "have passed from death unto life." Or, again, in this way: He that now loves God, that delights and rejoices in him with a humble joy, a holy peace, and an obedient love, is a child of God. But I thus love, delight, and rejoice in God; therefore, I am a child of God. The disciple is often and usefully thus employed, searching and trying his ways and thoughts, and comparing his experience with the Bible standard. "Yet all this," says Wesley, "is no other than rational evidence, the witness of our spirit, our reason, or understanding. It all resolves into this: Those having these marks are children of God; but we have these marks; therefore, we are children of God."

Love, peace, gentleness, and other "fruit of the Spirit," may be found in the heart and life; also hatred of sin and jealousy for God's honor, and strong desire for conformity to God's will. These are wrought by the self-same Holy Spirit in every one that hath them, but they are not to be confounded with His direct witness. A peculiarity of this "testimony of our spirit" is, that though yielding a degree of comfort and hope, it never rises to certainty. It is cumulative, but no accumulation of it amounts to full assurance. Probability is its result and doubt its companion. The humble-minded disciple is aware that the heart is deceitful and wicked, and may easily magnify what counts for, and extenuate what weighs against, its hope. Many discoveries are made in the hidden recesses of the soul, as well as in the outward life, that raise the painful question, Can all this consist with a gracious state? Am I indeed a child of God?

"Now," continues Wesley, "this is properly the testimony of our own spirit." And he proceeds to give his most important definition: "But what is that testimony of God's Spirit which is



superadded to and conjoined with this? How does He 'bear witness with our spirit, that we are children of God?' It is hard to find words in the language of men to explain 'the deep things of God.' Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the children of God experience. But perhaps one might say (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, to soften, or strengthen the expression): The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

Twenty years afterward, preaching on the same subject, he repeated this form of sound words: "After twenty years' further consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this. Neither do I conceive how any of these expressions may be altered, so as to make them more intelligible. Meantime," he adds, "let it be observed, I do not mean hereby that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice; no, nor always by an inward voice. But He so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm; the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that God is reconciled."

Of this "meridian evidence," Wesley further speaks: "The manner how the *divine* testimony is manifested to the heart I do not take upon me to explain. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; I cannot attain unto it. The wind bloweth, and I hear the sound thereof; but I cannot tell how it cometh, or whither it goeth. As no one knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him, so the *manner* of the things of God knoweth no one, save the Spirit of God. But the fact we know, namely, that the Spirit of God does give a believer such a testimony of his adoption that while it is present to the soul he can no more doubt the reality of his sonship than he can doubt of the shining of the sun while he stands in the full blaze of his beams."

Wesley points out the error of those who, while admitting in words the testimony of the Holy Spirit, mean only the inferential evidence derived from the fruit of the Spirit; who, though speaking of joint witnesses, yet "swallow up" the testimony of both in one.

But the point in question is, whether there be any *direct* testimony of the Spirit at all; whether there be any other testimony of the Spirit than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit.

I believe there is; because that is the plain, natural meaning of the text: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." It is manifest, here are two witnesses mentioned, who together testify the same thing; the Spirit of God, and our own spirit. The late Bishop of London, in his sermon on this text, seems astonished that any one can doubt of this, which appears upon the very face of the words. Now, "the testimony of our own spirit," says the bishop, "is one, which is the consciousness of our own sincerity;" or, to express the same thing a little more clearly, the consciousness of the fruit of the Spirit. When our spirit is conscious of this—of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness—it easily infers from these premises that we are the children of God. It is true that the great man supposes the other witness to be "the consciousness of our own good works." This, he affirms, is the testimony of God's Spirit. But this is included in the testimony of our own spirit.

A few extracts from the writings of the older divines may help to set forth the distinction and the doctrine:

It is the office of the Holy Ghost to assure us of the adoption of sons, to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God toward us, to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." And "because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." As, therefore, we are born again by the Spirit, and receive from him our regeneration, so we are also assured by the same Spirit of our adoption.—*Pearson on the Creed.*

The Spirit which God hath given us to assure us that we are the sons of God, to enable us to call upon him as our Father.—*Hooker on Certainty of Faith.*

From Dr. Owen "On the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 16): "'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the sons of God;' the witness which our own spirits do give unto our adoption is *the work and effect* of the Holy Spirit in us; if it were not, it would be false, and not confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit himself, who is the Spirit of truth. 'And none knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God.' (1 Cor. ii. 11.) If he declare not our sonship in us and to us, we cannot know it. How doth he then bear witness to our spirits? What is the distinct testimony? It must be some such act of his as evidenceth itself to be from him, *immediately*, unto them that are concerned in it—that is, those unto whom it is given."

From Poole, "On Romans" (viii. 16): "The Spirit of adoption doth not only excite us to call upon God as our Father, but it doth ascertain and assure us, as before, that we are his children. And this it doth not by an outward voice, as God the Father to Jesus Christ; nor by an angel, as to Daniel and the Virgin Mary; but by an inward and secret suggestion, whereby he raiseth our hearts to this persuasion, that God is our Father, and we are his children. This is not the testimony of the graces and operations of the Spirit, but of the Spirit itself."

Having stated a vital truth, more at large and more clearly than others have done, Wesley turns attention to objections, and shows how this joint testimony of God's Spirit and our own may be distinguished from presumption and delusion. That fanatics can abuse it is not sufficient reason for "denying the gift of God, and giving up the great privilege of his children." Justification by faith, as taught by St. Paul, was objected to in his day as leading to licentiousness. Divine truth must not be surrendered or retired because human weakness or wickedness can pervert it.

The direct witness is never referred to in the book of God as standing alone, but as connected with the other; as giving a *joint testimony*—testifying *with our spirit* that we are children of God. The "tree is known by its fruit;" hereby we *prove* if it be "of God." No man's word can be taken for this inward witness whose outward life does not answer to the profession:

By the present marks may we easily distinguish a child of God from a presumptuous self-deceiver. The Scriptures describe that joy in the Lord which accompanies the witness of his Spirit as a humble joy—a joy that abases to the dust, that makes a pardoned sinner cry out: "I am vile! What am I, or my father's house? Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes!" And wherever lowliness is, there is meekness, patience, gentleness, long-suffering. There is a soft, yielding spirit—a mildness and sweetness, a tenderness of soul, which words cannot express. But do these fruits attend that *supposed* testimony of the Spirit in a presumptuous man? Just the reverse. The more confident he is of the favor of God, the more is he lifted up; the more does he exalt himself; the more haughty and assuming is his whole behavior. The stronger witness he imagines himself to have, the more overbearing is he to all around him; the more incapable of receiving any reproof; the more impatient of contradiction. Instead of being more meek and gentle and teachable, more "swift to hear and slow to speak," he is more slow to hear and swift to speak.

"French prophets," in Wesley's day, brought this doctrine of Divine assurance into discredit with some who did not consider its limitations. Later, "Millerite prophets" in America claimed

this sanction for their calculations and predictions that the world would come to an end on a certain day—now past. Such pretensions were unwarranted. This assurance is a joint testimony, and it is promised on only one subject, and that the most important in the world to every man—"Am I a child of God?"

Reference is made to the test of experimental religion—"the experience of the children of God; the experience not of two or three, not of a few, but of a great multitude, which no man can number. It has been confirmed, both in this and in all ages, by 'a cloud' of living and dying 'witnesses.' It is confirmed by *your* experience and *mine*," says Wesley. "The Spirit itself bore witness to my spirit, that I was a child of God, gave me an evidence hereof; and I immediately cried, 'Abba, Father!' And this I did (and so did you) before I reflected on, or was conscious of, any fruit of the Spirit."

The application of this strong and comfortable doctrine, in such hands as John Wesley's, may be foreseen:

To secure us from all delusion, God gives us two witnesses that we are his children. And this they testify conjointly. Therefore, "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Beware, then, thou who art called by the name of Christ, that thou come not short of the mark of thy high calling. Beware thou rest not, either in a natural state, with too many that are accounted *good Christians*; or in a legal state, wherein those who are highly esteemed of men are generally content to live and die. Nay, but God hath prepared better things for thee, if thou follow on till thou attain. Thou art not called to fear and tremble, like devils; but to rejoice and love, like the angels of God. Well, then, mayest thou say, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" Thanks be unto God, who giveth me to "know in whom I have believed;" who hath "sent forth the Spirit of his Son into my heart, crying, Abba, Father," and even now, "bearing witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God!" And see that not only thy lips, but thy life, show forth his praise.

To the material truth as set forth by Wesley—the direct testimony of the Spirit for every believer—all Methodists agree. As to an incidental or secondary point, whether or not this testimony always precedes the testimony of our own spirit in the new birth, there is not equal uniformity of opinion. Some experiences which Wesley himself has published, with implied if not express approval, can hardly be reconciled with the theory of the invariable precedence of the Spirit's testimony. The persons in question were doubtless real Christians—walking in the best light and comfort they had for months, it may be years, before receiv-

ing the "meridian evidence." In the case of "sudden conversions," undoubtedly the first notice is from above, before the soul has opportunity to perceive or reflect upon any fruit of the Spirit, in regeneration, as manifested in the realm of consciousness.

There is such a witness, and all may have it. After this fashion Wesley presses home the truth, in conclusion:

Let none rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness. There may be foretastes of joy, of peace, of love, and those not delusive, but really from God long before we have the witness in ourselves—before the Spirit of God witnesses with our spirits that we have "redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins." Yea, there may be a degree of long-suffering, of gentleness, of fidelity, meekness, temperance (not a shadow thereof, but a real degree, by the preventing grace of God), before we "are accepted in the Beloved," and consequently, before we have a testimony of our acceptance; but it is by no means advisable to rest here; it is at the peril of our souls if we do. If we are wise, we shall be continually crying to God, until his Spirit cry in our heart, "Abba, Father!" This is the privilege of all the children of God; and without this we can never be assured that we are his children. Without this we cannot retain a steady peace, nor avoid perplexing doubts and fears. But when we have once received this Spirit of adoption, this "peace which passeth all understanding," and which expels all painful doubt and fear, will "keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." And when this has brought forth its genuine fruit, all inward and outward holiness, it is undoubtedly the will of him that calleth us to give us always what he has once given; so that there is no need that we should ever more be deprived of either the testimony of God's Spirit or the testimony of our own, the consciousness of our walking in all righteousness and true holiness.

The great fact and force in the Methodist revival was the experience and the preaching of this witness of the Spirit. Justification by faith had been stated in the homilies and articles of the Church of England with the precision and frequency that might be expected concerning the dogma on which the Reformation rested. Though lost sight of, and even opposed, it was there; and the first Methodists appealed to those standards. Not so with the doctrine of the Spirit's testimony. It was obscurely and inferentially supported from that quarter, while for obvious reasons Calvinistic dissent dealt with it feebly and infrequently. For if "once in grace always in grace" be true, then *present* assurance becomes the assurance of *eternal* salvation; and consequences follow which practical morality hesitates to accept. It was for the Methodists, standing on the evangelical, Arminian platform, to proclaim the fact that the plan of redemption in its completeness made provision not only for the forgiveness of sin, but that men might *know* that their sins were forgiven.

The effect upon the preachers was inspiring. Embassadors of God must be confident of their commission and of their message. They are empowered to comfort his people, and in such a message there is comfort. The personal experience of evangelists must be clear: "We believe, and therefore speak." Otherwise their preaching may be entertaining, instructive, and, under great earnestness, even awakening; but the lament to the prophet of Israel is applicable to souls brought into salutary distress by such a ministry: "The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth."

After the personal experience of this doctrine by Wesley and his co-laborers, their word was in power, sinners trembled, and great numbers were converted. "From this time," is the declaration of a leading Wesleyan, "they began properly to preach the gospel." They had labored with all their energy and ability to establish the righteousness of the law, but neither knew nor preached the doctrines of the new covenant, and its comforts. Like all men destitute of personal and experimental faith and hope and joy in the Lord, they never thought of offering pardon and peace to the guilty through the alone merits of Jesus Christ; and nothing short of this is the gospel.

What they had felt and seen with confidence they told, and men listened to them as men in danger and trouble always will listen to those who show them the way of salvation. This witness of the Spirit was the key-note of their ministry, the burden of their songs, and the secret of their success. The weary and heavy-laden were offered *rest*—rest for their souls. Those who had been taught that chronic doubt was a sort of Christian virtue heard gladly of a more excellent way. Happy converts testified and shouted. The joy of the Lord was their strength. The voice of praise was in their tabernacles. The fervor of their devotions and the zeal of their evangelism—while defying the worldly and stirring up the lukewarm—drew to Methodism the most earnest elements, and gave it a place with the foremost in the Church militant.

## CHAPTER XI.

Wesley Visits Herrnhut—Experiences of the Brethren—Wesley Returns to England; Begins his Life-work—Whitefield—The Pentecostal Season—Shut out of the Churches—The Messengers Let Loose—Field-preaching Inaugurated.

BEFORE Wesley entered upon his life-work, having no pre-conceived plan or course of conduct but to seek good for himself and to do good to others, he visited the Moravian settlements in Germany. He had met Moravians on his voyage to Georgia. At Savannah, Spangenberg was his first acquaintance. On his return to London he found Böhler. Naturally he wished to know more of this people; and three weeks after his conversion, accompanied by his friend Ingham, he set out on his journey. Herrnhut, their chief settlement, most interested him and there he tarried longest. Talents and learning did not prevent him from feeling as “a babe” in Christ. Here he could converse with persons of matured Christian knowledge, who had made it their business and study to speak of divine things. Wesley availed himself of this privilege, and wrote down the substance of what he was told of the religious experience of several of the most distinguished of these disciples of Christ. He took note of their discipline, and attended their love-feasts, conferences, and Bible expositions to great profit; though not approving every thing he saw at this Jerusalem Church.

Christian David, the carpenter, by whose preaching and pioneering this colony had been founded, was happily at home, lately arrived from mission-work in Greenland. “Four times,” says Wesley in his journal, “I enjoyed the blessing of hearing him preach, during the few days I spent here; and every time he chose the very subject which I should have desired, had I spoken to him before. Thrice he described the state of those who are ‘weak in faith,’ who have received forgiveness through the blood of Christ, but have not received the constant indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This state he explained once from ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;’ when he showed at large, from various scriptures, that many are children of God and heirs of the promises, long before they are

comforted by the abiding witness of the Spirit, melting their souls into all gentleness and 'meekness.'” In a private conversation Christian David said that “for many years he had had the forgiveness of sins, and a measure of the peace of God, before he had that witness of his Spirit which shuts out all doubt and fear.” Another witness testified thus:

Martin Döber, when I described my state to him, said he had known very many believers who, if he asked the question, would not have dared to affirm that they were the children of God. And he added: “It is very common for persons to receive remission of sins, or justification through faith in the blood of Christ, before they receive the full assurance of faith, which God many times withholds till he has tried whether they will work together with him in the use of the first gift. Nor is there any need (continued Döber) to incite any one to seek that assurance by telling him the faith he has is nothing. This will be more likely to drive him to despair than to encourage him to press forward. His single business, who has received the first gift, is *credendo credere et in credendo perseverare* (to believe on, and to hold fast that whereunto he hath attained); to go on doing his Lord's will, according to the ability God hath already given, cheerfully and faithfully to use what he has received.”

Wesley elicited the religious experience of Michael Linner, the oldest member of the Church, which was to the effect that Michael believed to the saving of his soul more than two years before he received the full assurance of faith; though he admitted that “the leading of the Spirit is different in different souls. His more usual method is, to give in one and the same moment the forgiveness of sins and a full assurance of that forgiveness. Yet in many he works as he did in me—giving first the remission of sins, and after some weeks, or months, or years, the full assurance of it.” “This great truth was further confirmed to me,” says Wesley the next day, “by the conversation I had with David Nitschman, one of the teachers or pastors of the Church.” The narrative of others was more of a Wesleyan kind, and confirmative of the view that when sins are forgiven the Spirit at the same moment gives the assurance of it.

Wesley's characteristic fairness and his readiness to learn are seen in his giving at length experiences that differed circumstantially, though not substantially, from his own. Even now he began to comprehend a principle which a few years later he enunciated and ever followed: “I trust we shall all suffer God to carry on his own work in the way that pleaseth him.” He was confirmed in the belief of that “meridian evidence that puts



doubt to flight." Sooner or later they all had it, and its effects in all were alike.

The fourth sermon of Christian David so impressed Wesley that he wrote it out, and we here present his draught, as it so well agrees with what he afterward uniformly taught:

The word of reconciliation which the apostles preached as the foundation of all they taught was, that "we are reconciled to God, not by our own works, nor by our own righteousness, but wholly and solely by the blood of Christ." But you will say, Must I not grieve and mourn for my sins? Must I not humble myself before God? Is not this just and right? And must I not first do this before I can expect God to be reconciled to me? I answer: It is just and right. You must be humbled before God. You must have a broken and contrite heart. But then observe, this is not your own work. Do you grieve that you are a sinner? This is the work of the Holy Ghost. Are you contrite? Are you humbled before God? Do you indeed mourn, and is your heart broken within you? All this worketh the self-same Spirit.

Observe again, this is not the foundation. It is not this by which you are justified. This is not the righteousness, this is no part of the righteousness, by which you are reconciled unto God. You grieve for your sins. You are deeply humble. Your heart is broken. Well; but all this is nothing to your justification.\* The remission of your sins is not owing to this cause, either in whole or in part. Your humiliation and contrition have no influence on that. Nay, observe further, that it may hinder your justification; that is, if you build any thing upon it; if you think "I must be *so or so* contrite. I must grieve *more* before I can be justified." Understand this well. To think you must be *more* contrite, *more* humble, *more* grieved, *more* sensible of the weight of sin, before you can be justified, is to lay your contrition, your grief, your humiliation, for the foundation of your being justified; at least, for a part of the foundation. Therefore, it hinders your justification; and a hinderance it is which must be removed before you can lay the right foundation. The right foundation is not *your* contrition (though that is not *your own*), not *your* righteousness, nothing of *your own*; nothing that is wrought *in you* by the Holy Ghost; but it is something *without you*, viz., the righteousness and the blood of Christ. For this is the word: "To him that believeth on God that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." See ye not that the foundation is nothing in us? There is no connection between God and the ungodly. There is no tie to unite them. They are altogether separate from each other. They have nothing in common. There is nothing less or more in the ungodly to join them to God. Works, righteousness, contrition? No. Ungodliness only. This, then, do—if you will lay a right foundation—go straight to Christ with all your ungodliness. Tell him: Thou whose eyes are as a flame of fire, searching my heart, seest that I am ungodly. I plead nothing else. I do not say I am humble, or contrite, but I am ungodly, therefore, bring me to Him that justifieth the ungodly. Let thy blood be the propitiation for me; for there is nothing in me but ungodliness.

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\* "This is not guarded. These things do not merit our justification, but they are absolutely necessary in order to it. God never pardons the impenitent.—*Wesley's Journal*

Here is a mystery. Here the wise men of the world are lost, are taken in their own craftiness. This the learned of the world cannot comprehend. It is foolishness unto them. Sin is the only thing which divides men from God. Sin (let him that heareth understand) is the only thing which unites them to God; that is, the only thing which moves the Lamb of God to have compassion upon them, and by his blood to give them access to the Father. This is the word of reconciliation which we preach. This is the foundation which never can be moved. By faith we are built upon this foundation; and this faith also is the gift of God. It is his free gift, which he now and ever giveth to every one that is willing to receive it. And when they have received this gift of God, then their hearts will melt for sorrow that they have offended him. But this gift of God lives in the heart, not in the head. The faith of the head, learned from men or books, is nothing worth. It brings neither remission of sins nor peace with God. Labor, then, to believe with your whole heart; so shall you have redemption through the blood of Christ; so shall you be cleansed from all sin; so shall you go on from strength to strength, being renewed day by day in righteousness and all true holiness.

The Oxford scholar, the learned Fellow, sat at the feet of this plain but powerful man, who, when not engaged in preaching at home or planting missions abroad, worked at his bench—type of that generation of wise but unlearned preachers, unknown and yet well known, who were to be raised up by the Head of the Church, under Wesley's labors: John Nelson, the stone-mason; Samuel Bradburn, the shoe-maker; John Haime, the soldier; and Thomas Olivers, the cobbler—fit successors of the fishermen of Galilee; by whom the saving truth of the gospel was delivered upon the mind and conscience of the people as they did not hear it at St. Paul's Cathedral or Westminster Abbey. "I would gladly," says Wesley, "have spent my life here; but my Master calling me to labor in another part of his vineyard, I was constrained to take my leave of this happy place. O when shall this Christianity cover the earth as 'the waters cover the sea!'" He adds in another place: "I was exceedingly comforted and strengthened by the conversation of this lovely people, and returned to England more fully determined to spend my life in testifying the gospel of the grace of God." He arrived in London September 16, 1738, and immediately began to preach Christ as he had never done before. The following entry in his journal shows the rate at which he started; and he kept it up for over a half century:

Sunday, 17th, I began to declare again in my own country the glad tidings of salvation, preaching three times, and afterward expounding the Holy Scriptures to a large company in the Minories. On Monday I rejoiced to meet our little

society, which now consisted of thirty-two persons. The next day I went to the condemned felons at Newgate, and offered them a free salvation. In the evening I went to a society in Bear Yard, and preached repentance and remission of sins. The next evening I spoke the truth in love at a society in Aldersgate street, etc.

So little ground is there for the insinuation, often made, that he "early formed the scheme of making himself the head of a sect:" Wesley seems to have had no plan beyond doing the duty that lay next to him, and waiting on Providence for the next step. He was free to duty. His fellowship supported him, and no public collections or private contributions were needed. Watson says: "If he had any plan at all at this time, beyond what circumstances daily opened to him, and from which he might infer the path of duty, it was to revive religion in the Church to which he belonged. Wherever he was invited he preached the obsolete doctrine of salvation by grace through faith." In London great crowds followed him; the clergy generally excepted to his statement of the doctrine; the "genteel" part of his audiences were offended at the bustle of crowded congregations; and soon almost all the churches of the metropolis, one after another, were shut against him. He had, however, largely labored in various parts of the metropolis in churches, rooms, houses, and prisons, and the effects produced were powerful and lasting. A month subsequent to his return, he wrote as follows to his Herrnhut friends:

We are endeavoring here to be followers of you, as ye are of Christ. Fourteen have been added to us since our return, so that we have now eight bands, all of whom seek for salvation only in the blood of Christ. Though my brother and I are not permitted to preach in most of the churches in London, yet there are others left, wherein we have liberty to speak the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor hath he left himself without other witnesses of his grace and truth. Ten ministers I know now in England who lay the right foundation—"the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Over and above whom I have found one Anabaptist, and one, if not two, of the teachers among the Presbyterians here, who, I hope, love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and teach the way of God in truth.

This shows that Wesley thought there were other clergymen besides himself who were evangelical, and also, though converted, that he still retained enough of his High-church prejudice to make a difference between Church of England "*ministers*," and Presbyterian "*teachers*."

In December Whitefield arrived in England from America. On hearing of his return, his friend "hastened to London," and they again "took sweet counsel together," and encouraged each

other in the service of their common Master. Whitefield was not a little delighted to find a great increase of the work of God, both as to light and love, doctrine and practice. He found that those who had been awakened by his preaching a year ago had "grown strong men in Christ, by the ministrations of his dear friends and fellow-laborers, John and Charles Wesley." The old doctrine, of justification by faith only, had been much revived; and he ended the eventful year of 1738 by preaching and expounding, during the last week of it, not fewer than twenty-seven times. But the churches closed up behind him. In three days five were denied him, and he too, like the Wesleys, resorted to the "society-meetings," and their closer fellowship.

Wesley describes a scene at one of these meetings reminding us of the Pentecostal baptism, by which the apostles were "endued with power from on high" for their mission. He says, January 1, 1739, Messrs. Hutchins, Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, and his brother Charles, were present with him at a love-feast in Fetter-lane, with sixty of the brethren. About three in the morning, as they were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon them, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as they had recovered a little from the awe and amazement which the presence of the Divine Majesty had inspired, they broke out with one voice: "We praise thee, O God! we acknowledge thee to be the Lord." Whitefield exclaims: "It was a Pentecostal season indeed!" And he adds, respecting these "society-meetings," that "sometimes whole nights were spent in prayer. Often have we been filled as with new wine, and often have I seen them overwhelmed with the Divine Presence, and cry out, 'Will God indeed dwell with men upon earth? How dreadful is this place! This is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven!'" January 5, seven of the despised Methodist clergymen (probably the seven just mentioned) held a conference at Islington, on several matters of great importance; and after prayer and fasting, "we parted," says Whitefield, "with a full conviction that God was going to do great things among us"—a conviction which was soon verified.

Incredible as it may seem, John Wesley, in that very church, a few days afterward solemnly and rather demonstratively re-baptized five Presbyterians, who had received *lay baptism* in their

infancy—that is, in the jargon of apostolic succession, they had been baptized by Dissenting ministers—*possibly* by his own grandfather, Dr. Annesley! Charles, about the same time, gave *episcopal* baptism to a woman who was dissatisfied with her *lay* baptism; denominating the ordinance “hypothetical baptism”—that is, Christian baptism, provided the former administration of the ordinance by a Dissenting minister were not in accordance with the mind of God. To the discomfort of the archbishop, it was noised about that this was done by his special sanction. The thing was rendered unpopular just then by its connection with Methodism. The two brothers got a sharp lecture from his lordship. He strongly disapproved of their practice of rebaptizing persons who had been baptized by Dissenters, and showed himself, in this respect, if not more liberal, at least better versed in ecclesiastical law and usage than the two honest and ardent young Methodists. More High-church nonsense! But the day of light and enlargement is at hand, and Wesley will come out of that. The habitual attitude of a man toward the truth is more decisive of character than any opinions he may happen to hold at a given time. If he is loyal to the truth, willing to know it and do it, the truth will make him free. St. Paul, for all such cases of prejudice and error, gives a solid ground for hopeful forbearance: “And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.”

Whitefield wished to take collections for his Orphan-house, but only two or three churches still remained at his command. Preaching in one of them with “great freedom of heart and clearness of voice,” while nearly a thousand people stood outside the edifice, and hundreds went away for want of room, an idea occurred to him not included in the plan of the sermon. “This,” he says, “put me first upon thinking of preaching without doors. I mentioned it to some friends, who looked upon it as a mad notion. However, we knelt down and prayed that nothing might be done rashly. Hear and answer, O Lord, for thy name’s sake!”

Shut out of the London churches, he set off to Bristol. Popular as he had once been there, his Methodism now met the usual disfavor and result. The chancellor distinctly threatened that, if he continued to preach or expound in the diocese without license, he should first be suspended and then expelled. This was the turning-point. Shut out of the Bristol churches, he went,

on February 17, and preached, in the open air, to two hundred colliers at Kingswood. This was a bold step—a shocking departure from Church rules and usages. The Rubicon was passed. A clergyman had dared to be so irregular as to preach in the open air! At the second Kingswood service, Whitefield says he had two thousand people to hear him; and at the third, four thousand; while, at the fifth service, the four thousand were increased to ten. He declares he never preached with greater power. Day after day, and from place to place, he preached to congregations that no house could hold. March 18, his congregation at Rose Green was estimated at not less than twenty thousand, to whom he preached nearly an hour and a half. A gentleman loaned him a large bowling-green in the heart of Bristol, and here he preached to seven or eight thousand people. All this transpired within six weeks, and at nearly all these strange and enormous gatherings Whitefield made a collection for his Orphan-house in Georgia.

He took courage from the reflection that he was imitating the example of Christ, who had a mountain for his pulpit and the heavens for a sounding-board. “Blessed be God,” he writes, “that the ice is now broke, and I have now taken the field. Some may censure me, but is there not a cause? Pulpits are denied, and the poor colliers are ready to perish for lack of knowledge.”

Kingswood was formerly a royal chase, containing between three and four thousand acres; but it had been gradually appropriated by the several lords whose estates encircled it. The deer had disappeared, and the greater part of the wood also; coal-mines had been discovered, and it was now inhabited by a race of people differing as much from those of the surrounding country in dialect as in appearance. They had no place of worship—for Kingswood was three miles distant from the parish church—and were famous for neither fearing God nor regarding man. Their condition was desperate.

When the Wesleys and Mr. Whitefield first gave indications of an extraordinary zeal for the spread of religion, it was said to them: “If you wish to convert heathens, go to Kingswood.” The challenge was accepted, and their success among this brutally ignorant and wicked people, for whose salvation no man cared, was an event of the greatest significance. It encouraged them to take hold of the worst cases and classes. None were

henceforth considered beyond reach. The Lord thus increased the faith of the preachers; and also put an argument in the mouths of their friends, and a practical demonstration before the world of the saving and transforming power of the gospel, at the very outset of the Methodist revival.

Whitefield's marvelous powers as an orator found their full play in this new arena, and his poetic spirit felt the grandeur of the scene and its surroundings. The moral effect still more deeply impressed him. Having no righteousness of their own to trust in, the poor colliers were glad to hear that Christ was a friend to publicans, and came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. He could see the effect of his words by the white gutters made by the tears which trickled down their blackened cheeks, for they came unwashed out of the coal-pits to hear him. Hundreds of them were brought under deep religious impressions, which resulted in their happy conversion and thorough reformation.

He wrote Wesley to come to his help. Other cities were to be visited by him, and he wished his old friend to be his successor at Bristol. Wesley hesitated, took counsel of his brother and friends, prayed over it, and went. Saturday, March 31, he reached Bristol, and met Whitefield. Referring to this interview, Wesley observes: "I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church."

Wesley (still in a house) continues: "In the evening (Mr. Whitefield being gone) I began expounding our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (one pretty remarkable precedent of field-preaching, though I suppose there were churches at that time also) to a little society which was accustomed to meet once or twice a week in Nicholas street."

Such were the prejudices and the hesitation of the man who, for between fifty and sixty years, proved himself the greatest field-preacher that ever lived. Monday, April 2d, at four in the afternoon, he "submitted to be more vile," he says, and proclaimed in the open air the glad tidings of salvation, from a little eminence in a ground adjoining the city, to about three thousand

people. His text befitted the occasion: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." In a few days more, he was standing on the top of Hannam Mount, in Kingswood, proclaiming: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!" and in the afternoon of that same day he again stood up amid five thousand, and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink!"

Whitefield, committing his outdoor congregations to Wesley, left for Wales to work on the same line of things. As he passed through Kingswood, the colliers stopped him; they had prepared an "entertainment" for him, and offered subscriptions for a charity school to be established among them. Laying, at their request, a corner-stone for the building, he knelt down on the ground and prayed that the gates of hell might not prevail against it; to which rough voices responded "Amen."

With the exception of brief visits to London in June, September, and November, and of a short tour into Wales, Wesley spent from April to the end of 1739 in Bristol and its neighborhood, and delivered about five hundred discourses and expositions in the nine months, only eight of which were in "consecrated places." His preaching plan was as follows: An exposition to one or other of the Bristol societies every night, and preaching every Sunday morning, and every Monday and Saturday afternoon. At Kingswood (including Hannam Mount, Rose Green, and Two Mile Hill), he preached twice every Sabbath, and also every alternate Tuesday and Friday. At Baptist Mills (a suburb of Bristol), he preached every Friday; at Bath, once a fortnight, on Tuesday; and at Pensford, once a fortnight, on Thursday. Besides this, every morning he read prayers and preached at the prison.

When his brother returned from Herrnhut, Charles Wesley met him with great joy in London, and they "compared their experience in the things of God." He now first began to preach extempore. Islington was one of the few London churches which had a rector in sympathy with Methodism, and Charles accepted a curacy under him. But the church-wardens, with the counte



nance of the bishop, soon ousted him, and he was thrown, without knowing why, into the current of great events. Protesting against the intolerance of man, by copying the example of man's Redeemer, he too went forth into the fields calling sinners to repentance. Little did Charles dream what was before him, when he made this entry in his journal: "March 28th. We strove to dissuade my brother from going to Bristol, to which he was pressingly invited, from an unaccountable fear that it would prove fatal to him. He offered himself willingly to whatever the Lord should appoint. The next day he set out, recommended by us to the grace of God. He left a blessing behind him. I desired to die with him."

His holding forth in society-meetings and in private houses, and his irregular way of saving souls, could not long escape notice. Whilst John Wesley was still at Bristol, Charles had a painful interview at Lambeth with the archbishop. His grace took no exceptions to his doctrine, but condemned the irregularity of his proceedings, and even hinted at excommunication. This threw him into great perplexity of mind, until Whitefield, with characteristic boldness, urged him to preach "in the fields the next Sunday; by which step he would break down the bridge, render his retreat difficult or impossible, and be forced to fight his way forward." This advice was followed. He writes:

June 24th, I prayed and went forth in the name of Jesus Christ. I found near a thousand helpless sinners waiting for the word in Moorfields. I invited them in my Master's words, as well as name: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." The Lord was with me, even me, the meanest of his messengers, according to his promise. At St. Paul's, the psalms, lessons, etc., for the day, put new life into me; and so did the sacrament. My load was gone, and all my doubts and scruples. God shone on my path, and I knew this was his will concerning me. I walked to Kennington Common, and cried to multitudes upon multitudes: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." The Lord was my strength, and my mouth, and my wisdom. O that all would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness!

At Oxford, the dean rebuked and threatened him for his field-preaching; but he seized the opportunity of bearing his testimony to justification by faith, preaching with great boldness before the university. On his return to London, he resumed field-preaching in Moorfields, and on Kennington Common. At one time it was computed that as many as ten thousand persons were collected, and great numbers were roused to a serious inquiry

after religion. His word was occasionally attended with an overwhelming influence.

The three great preachers are now liberated. Thanks to bigotry! God overrules the wrath of man. These things shall turn out for the furtherance of the gospel. "It was by field-preaching," remarks a thoughtful critic of the movement then dating, "and in no other possible way, that England could be roused from its spiritual slumber, or Methodism spread over the country, and rooted where it spread. The men who commenced and achieved this arduous service—and they were scholars and gentlemen—displayed a courage far surpassing that which carries the soldier through the hail-storm of the battle-field. Ten thousand might more easily be found who would confront a battery than two who, with the sensitiveness of education about them, could mount a table by the road-side, give out a psalm, and gather a mob."

"The field-preaching of Wesley and Whitefield, in 1739," says Isaac Taylor, "was the event whence the religious epoch, now current, must date its commencement. Back to the events of that time must we look, necessarily, as often as we seek to trace to its source what is most characteristic of the present time."

[Wesley's Journals; Tyerman's Life and Times of Rev John Wesley, M.A.; and Watson's Life of Wesley, furnish the substance of this Chapter.]

## CHAPTER XII.

*Difficulties and Triumphs of Field-preachers—Bodily Agitations: How Accounted for—Active Enemies—Lukewarm Friends—The Word Prevails.*

NO wonder Methodists were “made a gazing stock.” Their style of preaching and their doctrine were novel. “Being convinced,” writes Wesley, “of that important truth which is the foundation of all real religion, that ‘by grace we are saved through faith,’ we immediately began declaring it to others. Indeed, we could hardly speak of any thing else, either in public or private. It shone upon our minds with so strong a light that it was our constant theme. It was our daily subject, both in verse and prose; and we vehemently defended it against all mankind. But in doing this, we were assaulted and abused on every side. We were stoned in the streets, and several times narrowly escaped with our lives. In sermons, newspapers, and pamphlets of all kinds, we were painted as unheard-of monsters.” Hutton’s *Memoirs* gives a lively description:

In the year 1739 open-air preaching commenced in England; for the clergy had closed all their churches against the Methodists, and the Bishop of London (Dr. Edmund Gibson) had inhibited any Methodist preacher from becoming an assistant (adjunct) at Islington Church. Both bishop and clergy remained steadfast in their determination to eradicate Methodism, with its advocates, from their pulpits. The congregations which flocked to the open-air preaching were composed of every description of persons from all parts of the town, who without the slightest attempt at order assembled, crying “Hurrah!” with one breath, and with the next bellying and bursting into tears on account of their sins; some poking each other’s ribs, laughing, and throwing stones and dirt, and almost pressing one another to death; others joyously shouting “Halleluiahs,” etc. In fact, it was a jumble of extremes of good and evil; and so distracted alike were both preachers and hearers, that it was enough to make one cry to God for his interference. After awhile matters proceeded less disorderly, a tolerable silence prevailed, and many present, who had come prepared to hurl stones at the preacher, received something in their hearts for time and eternity. Here thieves, prostitutes, fools, people of every class, several men of distinction, a few of the learned, merchants, and numbers of poor people who had never entered a place of worship, assembled in these crowds and became godly.

The messengers of salvation who go into the highways and hedges seeking lost souls, must take people as they find them.

That was doubtless a disorderly multitude which heard the words, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The congregation that flocked to the sea-side, "without the slightest attempt at order," were privileged to hear the original of the Parable of the Sower. The multitude to whom the Sermon on the Mount was addressed was not select. When the Master looked upon these masses of human beings—restless, unhappy, ignorant—he was "moved with compassion" for them as sheep having no shepherd. Similar feelings become his servants. Æsthetic taste must be held in abeyance, and clerical dignity stand aside; the *people* must be reached and subdued to the gospel; and Methodism, by its birth and baptism, is pledged to this work. The author of Hutton's Memoirs was a Moravian, of social culture, affecting "stillness;" he delighted to instruct, and was capable of instructing, the choice spirits that could be gathered into a "society-room," or the parlor on "College street, Westminster," or the cosy office of his book-store. An agency is wanted that is bolder and more aggressive; for the world will never be reached and converted at that rate. "Multitudes" must be added to the Church daily. The acute observer before quoted remarks:

Within the Moravian circle, the prevailing force is centripetal; within the Wesleyan, it is centrifugal. The Church of the Brethren has conserved within its small inclosures an idea of what was imagined to be pristine Christianity; and it has moored itself, here and there, in sheltered nooks of the world, amid the wide waters of general impiety or formality; but no such tranquil witness-bearing to primitive principles could have satisfied Wesley's evangelical zeal; and the Methodism which he framed was an invasive encampment upon the field of the world.\*

While enemies were ready to revile, those who ought to have been friends were cautious in their indorsement. Even the good Dr. Doddridge wrote (May 24, 1739): "I think the Methodists sincere; I hope some may be reformed, instructed, and made serious by their means. I saw Mr. Whitefield preaching on Kennington Common last week to an attentive multitude, and heard much of him at Bath; but, supposing him sincere and in good earnest, I still fancy that he is but a *weak* man—much too positive, says rash things, and is bold and enthusiastic. I am most heartily glad to hear that any *real* good is done anywhere to the souls of men," etc. Now and then a more outspoken Christian man ap-

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\* Wesley and Methodism.

peared. Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster, had in him the savor of Richard Baxter. Under the date of September 17, he writes, concerning the two Wesleys, Whitefield, and Ingham: "The common people flock to hear them, and in most places hear them gladly. They commonly preach once or twice every day, and expound the Scriptures in the evening to religious societies, who have their society-rooms for that purpose." Charles at this time visited his brother at Bristol, and it so happens that the manner of his preaching is described by Williams, whom curiosity and a religious temper led to hear him in a field near the city:

I found him standing on a table-board, in an erect posture, with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven in prayer. He prayed with uncommon fervor, fluency, and variety of proper expressions. He then preached about an hour in such a manner as I scarce ever heard any man preach. Though I have heard many a finer sermon, according to the common taste or acceptation of sermons, I never heard any man discover such evident signs of a vehement desire, or labor so earnestly to convince his hearers that they were all by nature in a sinful, lost, undone state. He showed how great a change faith in Christ would produce in the whole man, and that every man who is in Christ—that is, who believes in him unto salvation—is a new creature. Nor did he fail to press how ineffectual their faith would be to justify them, unless it wrought by love, purified their hearts, and was productive of good works. With uncommon fervor he acquitted himself as an ambassador of Christ, beseeching them in his name, and praying them in his stead, to be reconciled to God. And although he used no notes, nor had any thing in his hands but a Bible, yet he delivered his thoughts in a rich, copious variety of expression, and with so much propriety that I could not observe any thing incoherent or inanimate through the whole performance, which he concluded with singing, prayer, and the usual benediction.

In the evening the same competent and appreciative hearer accompanied Wesley to the society-meeting. The whole service took up nearly two hours; "but never, sure," says Williams, "did I hear such praying, never did I see or hear such evident marks of fervency in the service of God. At the close of every petition, a serious Amen, like a gentle rushing sound of waters, ran through the whole audience with such a solemn air as quite distinguished it from whatever of that nature I have heard attending the responses in the Church-service. If there be such a thing as heavenly music upon earth, I heard it there." Such a testimony, from a man so devout and justly famed as "the Kidderminster carpet-weaver," is quite as trustworthy as any of an opposite character from either Bishop Gibson or any priest then

dozing on the walls of Zion, or from Doddridge, or other learned preachers of Dissent then dying of respectability.

Field-preaching called into action other qualities besides the power to speak. The annoyances were infinite until the cause had triumphed. Missiles of stones and brickbats were not the greatest hinderances. Sometimes a furious ox was let loose into the crowd; or recruiting officers, with drum and fife, would pass through; or a mob of lewd fellows of the baser sort, fired with whisky, and led on by the "parson," with the watch-word "Fight for the Church," would intrude. On one occasion, John Wesley having taken his stand in the open air to preach, two men, hired for the purpose, began to sing ballads. Wesley and his friends met this by singing a psalm, thus drowning one noise with another.

At Bath he encountered a politer difficulty. "Beau Nash," master of ceremonies at that fashionable resort—he who prescribed ball-dresses for ladies and gentlemen, and the number of dances to be danced—gave out that on Wesley's next "appointment" there should be some fun: the accomplished rake and gamester meant to make sport of the preacher and stop him. "By this report," says Wesley, "I gained a much larger audience, among whom were many of the rich and great. I told them plainly the Scripture had concluded them all under sin; high and low, rich and poor, one with another. Many of them seemed to be a little surprised, and were sinking apace into seriousness," when the "Beau," in his immense white hat, appeared, and asked by what authority he dared to do what he was doing. Wesley replied: "By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by him who is now Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the gospel.'" "But this," said Nash, "is a conventicle, and contrary to act of parliament." "No," answered Wesley; "conventicles are seditious meetings, but here is no sedition; therefore, it is not contrary to act of parliament." "I say it is!" cried the hero of Bath; "and besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits." "Sir," said Wesley, "did you ever hear me preach?" "No." "How, then, can you judge of what you never heard?" "I judge," he answered, "by common report." "Common report," replied Wesley, "is not enough. Give me leave to ask you, sir, is not your name Nash?" "It is," said he. "Sir," retorted Wesley, "I dare not judge of you by common

report." The master of ceremonies was worsted; upon which an old woman begged Wesley to allow *her* to answer him; and, amid her taunts, the resplendent master of ceremonies sneaked away. "As I returned," says Wesley, "the street was full of people hurrying to and fro, and speaking great words; but when any of them asked, 'Which is he?' and I replied, 'I am he,' they were immediately silent."

Whitefield called preaching in Moorfields "attacking Satan in one of his strongholds;" and this he did on Sundays when in London. Once the table which had been placed for him was broken in pieces by the crowd. He took his stand, therefore, upon a wall which divided the upper and lower Moorfields, and preached without interruption. His favorite ground upon week-days was Kennington Common, and there prodigious multitudes gathered together to hear him. He had sometimes fourscore carriages, very many horsemen, and from thirty to forty thousand persons on foot; and both there and in Moorfields, on his Sunday preachings, when he collected for the Orphan-house, so many half-pence were given him by his poor auditors that he was wearied in receiving them, and they were more than one man could carry home. John Wesley had not yet faced a London outdoor congregation. On a brief visit to the metropolis he found Whitefield triumphing gloriously, and on the day after his arrival accompanied him to Blackheath, expecting to hear him preach. When they were upon the ground, where about twelve or fourteen thousand persons were assembled, Whitefield desired him to preach in his stead. Wesley was reluctant; nature recoiled, but he did not refuse. He says: "I preached on my favorite subject—'Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' I was greatly moved with compassion for the rich that were there, to whom I made a particular application. Some of them seemed to attend, while others drove away in their coaches from so uncouth a preacher." Whitefield, in his journal, says: "I had the pleasure of introducing my honored and reverend friend, Mr. John Wesley, to preach at Blackheath. The Lord give him ten thousand times more success than he has given me! I went to bed rejoicing that another fresh inroad was made into Satan's territories by Mr. Wesley's following me in field-preaching in London as well as in Bristol."

It is a noteworthy circumstance that though the preaching of Charles Wesley and of Whitefield was as faithful as that of John Wesley, and far more impassioned, yet no such "signs" attended their ministry as were attendant on his. Such items as these are found in his journal (1739):

May 1. Many were offended again, and indeed much more than before. Of those who had been long in darkness, ten persons, I afterward found, then began to say in faith, "My Lord and my God." A Quaker who stood by was not a little displeased at the dissimulation of those creatures, and was biting his lips and knitting his brows, when he dropped down as thunderstruck. The agony he was in was even terrible to behold.

May 21. Perhaps it might be because of the hardness of our hearts, unready to receive any thing unless we see it with our eyes and hear it with our ears, that God, in tender condescension to our weakness, suffered so many outward signs at the very time when he wrought this inward change, to be continually seen and heard among us. But although they saw "signs and wonders" (for so I must term them), yet many would not believe. They could not indeed *deny* the facts, but they could *explain* them away. Some said: "These were purely *natural* effects; the people fainted away only because of the heat and closeness of the rooms;" and others were "sure it was all a cheat; they might help it if they would; else, why were these things only in their private societies? why were they not done in the face of the sun?" To-day our Lord answered for himself—for, while I was enforcing these words, "Be still, and know that I am God," he began to make bare his arm—not in a close room, neither in private, but in the open air, and before more than two thousand witnesses. One, and another, and another, was struck to the earth, exceedingly trembling at the presence of his power; others cried, with a loud and bitter cry, "What must we do to be saved?" And in less than an hour seven persons, wholly unknown to me till that time, were rejoicing and singing, and with all their might giving thanks to the God of their salvation. In the evening I went on to declare what God had already done, in proof of that important truth that he is "not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." Another person dropped down, close to one who was a strong assertor of the contrary doctrine. While he stood astonished at the sight, a little boy near him was seized in the same manner. A young man who stood up behind fixed his eyes on him, and sunk down himself as one dead, but soon began to roar out, and beat himself against the ground, so that six men could scarcely hold him. His name was Thomas Maxfield. Except J——n H——n, I never saw one so torn of the evil one. I was called from supper to one who, feeling in herself such a conviction as she never had known before, had run out of the society in all haste that she might not expose herself. But the hand of God followed her still; so that after going a few steps, she was forced to be carried home; and when she was there, grew worse and worse. She was in a violent agony when we came. We called upon God, and her soul found rest. I think twenty-nine in all had their heaviness turned into joy this day.

Maxfield will be heard from again. The case of John Haydon,



referred to, occurred a few weeks before, and is told in the journal of May 2:

He was a man of a regular life, one that constantly attended the public prayers and sacrament, and was zealous for the Church, and against dissenters of every denomination. Being informed that people fell into strange fits at the societies, he came to see and judge for himself. But he was less satisfied than before; inso-much that he went about to his acquaintance, one after another, till one in the morning, and labored above measure to convince them it was a delusion of the devil. We were going home, when one met us in the street and informed us that J——n H——n was fallen raving mad. It seems he had sat down to dinner, but had a mind first to end a sermon he had borrowed, on "Salvation by Faith." In reading the last page, he changed color, fell off his chair, and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground. The neighbors were alarmed, and flocked together to the house. Between one and two I came in and found him on the floor, the room being full of people, whom his wife would have kept without, but he cried aloud: "No! let them all come; let all the world see the just judgment of God!" Two or three men were holding him as well as they could. "Ay, this is he who I said was a deceiver of the people. But God has overtaken me. I said it was all a delusion, but this is no delusion." We all betook ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty.

Returning to J——n H——n, we found his voice was lost, and his body weak as that of an infant; but his soul was in peace, full of love, and "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

Whitefield heard of these things, and was not pleased; for, as usual, gross misrepresentations had gone out. He visited Bristol, and Wesley writes: "But next day he had an opportunity of informing himself better; for, in the application of his sermon, four persons sunk down close to him, almost in the same moment. One of them lay without either sense or motion; a second trembled exceedingly; the third had strong convulsions all over his body, but made no noise, unless by groans; the fourth, equally convulsed, called upon God with strong cries and tears. From this time, I trust, we shall all suffer God to carry on his own work in the way that pleaseth him." Whitefield was silenced, if not satisfied. If it was so in England, we shall see greater things than these in America when the masses are reached by camp-meetings and field-preachers of the old Methodist type. There was much reasoning about these physical exercises in connection with spiritual. Men of the world discoursed flippantly of fanaticism, enthusiasm, zoo-mesmerism, and such like, always to the discredit of the ministry under which these things occur; the pious patterns of order and stillness were scandalized, and fools mocked. The words of Richard Watson are commended to them all:

The extraordinary manner in which some persons were frequently affected under Mr. Wesley's preaching as well as that of his coadjutors, now created much discussion, and to many gave much offense. Some were seized with trembling; others sunk down, and uttered loud and piercing cries; others fell into a kind of agony. In some instances, whilst prayer was offered for them, they rose up with a sudden change of feeling, testifying that they had "redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins." Mr. Samuel Wesley, who denied the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, treated these things, in a correspondence with his brother, alternately with sarcasm and serious severity, and particularly attacked the doctrine of assurance. In this controversy Mr. John Wesley attaches no weight whatever to these outward agitations, but contends that he is bound to believe the profession made by many who had been so affected, of an inward change, because that had been confirmed by their subsequent conduct and spirit.\*

Wesley unquestionably believed in special effusions of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon congregations and individuals, producing powerful emotions of mind, expressed in some instances by bodily affections; and there is the best authority—the Bible—for this belief. Jonathan Edwards, after the great awakening in his day, and mostly under his ministry, had to defend himself and his coadjutors, and the work itself, in a learned treatise on the subject of "Surprising Conversions." Watson continues:

That cases of real enthusiasm occurred, at this and subsequent periods, is indeed allowed. There are always nervous, dreamy, and excitable people to be found; and the emotion which was produced among those who were really so "pricked in the heart" as to cry with a sincerity equal to that which was felt by those of old, "What shall we do to be saved?" would often be communicated to such persons by natural sympathy. No one could be blamed for this unless he had encouraged the excitement for its own sake, or taught the people to regard it as a sign of grace, which most assuredly Mr. Wesley never did. Nor is it correct to represent these effects, genuine and factitious together, as peculiar to Methodism. A great impression was made by the preaching of the Wesleys and Mr. Whitefield in almost all places where they went. Thousands in the course of a few years, and of those too who had lived in the greatest unconcern as to spiritual things, and were most ignorant and depraved in their habits, were recovered from their vices, and the moral appearance of whole neighborhoods was changed. Yet the effects were not without precedent, even in those circumstances in which they have been thought most singular and exceptionable. Great and rapid results of this kind were produced in the first ages of Christianity, but not without "outcries," and strong corporeal as well as mental emotions—nay, and extravagances too. Such objectors might have known that like effects often accompanied the preaching of eminent men at the Reformation, and that many of the Puritan and Non-conformist ministers had similar successes in large districts in our own country.

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\* Watson's Life of Wesley.

They might have known that in Scotland, and also among the grave Presbyterians of New England, previous to the rise of Methodism, such impressions had not unfrequently been produced by the ministry of faithful men. It may be laid down as a principle established by fact that whenever a zealous and faithful ministry is raised up, after a long spiritual dearth, the early effects of that ministry are not only powerful, but often attended with extraordinary circumstances; nor are such extraordinary circumstances necessarily extravagances because they are not common. It is neither irrational nor unscriptural to suppose that times of great national darkness and depravity should require a strong remedy, and that the attention of the people should be roused by circumstances which could not fail to be noticed by the most unthinking. We do not attach primary importance to secondary circumstances, but they are not to be wholly disregarded. The Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice; yet that still small voice might not have been heard, except by minds roused from their inattention by the shaking of the earth and the sounding of the storm.

But even the liturgy and the ministry of the objectors pray for a measure of Divine influence, a degree of spiritual power, to bless the word preached, and to open the ears and hearts of the people, inclining them to keep God's law. On this ground—the lowest any can take and be called orthodox—Watson answers: “If, however, no special and peculiar effusion of Divine influence on the minds of many of Mr. Wesley's hearers be supposed; if we only assume the exertion of that ordinary influence which must accompany the labors of every minister of Christ to render them successful in saving men—the strong emotions often produced by the preaching of the founder of Methodism might be accounted for on principles very different from those adopted by many objectors. The multitudes to whom he preached were generally grossly ignorant of the gospel, and he poured upon their minds a flood of light; his discourses were plain, pointed, earnest, and affectionate; the feeling produced was deep, piercing, and, in numberless cases, such as we have no right, if we believe the Bible, to attribute to any other cause than that inward operation of God with his truth which alone can render human means effectual.”

A Yorkshire mason, John Nelson, came up to London, working at his trade. His labor amply supported him, and he and his wife lived, he says, “in a good way, as the world calls it—that is, in peace and plenty, and love to each other.” Though he had experienced neither sorrow nor misfortune of any kind, still he thought that rather than live thirty years more like the thirty which had passed, he would choose to be strangled. The fear of

judgment made him wish that he had never been born. The Established Church not meeting his case, he heard the Dissenters of various sorts, went to the Roman Catholics, and even attended Quakers' meetings: all to no purpose. As for the Jews, he thought it was useless to try them. He was settling down into a desperate state. At this time Whitefield preached outdoors, and he heard him, but was no better. "I loved the man," says Nelson, "so that if any one offered to disturb him, I was ready to fight for him, but I did not understand him; yet I got some hope of mercy, so that I was encouraged to pray on, and spend my leisure hours in reading the Scriptures." He slept little, and often awoke from horrible dreams, dripping with sweat and shivering with terror. Thus he continued, till Wesley preached, for the first time, in Moorfields. "O," said he, "that was a blessed morning for my soul! As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair and turned his face toward where I stood, and I thought he fixed his eyes on me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; and when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me."

Wesley, in winding up his sermons, pointing his exhortations and driving them home, spoke as if he were addressing himself to an individual; so that every one to whom the condition which he described was applicable felt as if he were singled out; and the preacher's words, like the eyes of a portrait, seemed to look at every beholder. "Who art thou," said the preacher, "that now seest and feelest thine inward and outward ungodliness? Thou art the man! I want thee for my Lord, I challenge *thee* for a child of God by faith. The Lord hath need of *thee*. Thou who feelest thou art just fit for hell art just fit to advance His glory—the glory of His free grace, justifying the ungodly, and him that worketh not. O come quickly! Believe in the Lord Jesus, and *thou*, even *thou*, art reconciled to God." When the sermon was ended, Nelson said within himself: "This man can tell the secrets of my heart. He hath not left me there, for he hath shown the remedy, even the blood of Jesus." His acquaintances professed alarm at his going too far in religion, and wished he had never heard Wesley, for it would be his ruin. "I told them," said he, "I had reason to bless God that ever he was born, for by hearing him I was made sensible that my business

in this world is to get well out of it; and as for my trade, health, wisdom, and all things in this world, they are no blessings to me, any further than as so many instruments to help me, by the grace of God, to work out my salvation." The family where he lodged were disposed to get rid of him, being afraid some mischief would come from "so much praying and fuss as he made about religion." He procured money and went to pay them what he owed them, but they would not let him leave. "What if John is right, and we are wrong?" they asked among themselves. "If God has done for you any thing more than for us, show us how we may find the same mercy;" and he was soon leading them to hear Wesley. He even hired a fellow-workman to hear him; and the mechanic afterward assured him that it was the best deed, both for himself and his wife, that any one had ever done for them. Fasting once a week, he gave the food saved to the poor. He went to Birstal, after his conversion, to visit his family, that he might recommend to them and his neighbors religion in person. His relations and acquaintances soon began to inquire what he thought of this new faith, and whether he believed there was any such thing as a man's knowing that his sins were forgiven. John told them, point-blank, that this new faith, as they called it, was the old faith of the gospel, and that he himself was as sure his sins were forgiven as he could be of the shining of the sun. Sitting in his door, after the day's labor, he read to those who came, and told his experience, and explained the Scriptures. The congregations increased, many were converted, and he became a preacher without knowing it, and was the pioneer and the chief founder of Methodism in that portion of England in which it has had signal success down to the present time.

Even Southey had a genuine admiration for some of Wesley's lay preachers; he appreciated the heroic element in them; and, after giving a particular account of Nelson's conversion, he lingers about the man that had as "brave a heart as ever Englishman was blessed with." One of Wesley's first-fruits in field-preaching, John Nelson himself became a successful field-preacher, and by him "much people was added unto the Lord."

## CHAPTER XIII.

Church Building—Titles of Property—The Foundry—Religious Societies—Fetter-lane—Threats of Excommunication: How Treated—Separation from the Moravians—Strange Doctrines—Stillness—Means of Grace.

**K**INGSWOOD SCHOOL, of which Whitefield laid the corner-stone, was finished in a year. The Orphan-house yielded occasionally to the claims of the Colliers' School, and public collections of about £100 were made by him. As for the rest, the building and management devolved on Wesley. For months wherever he went he took subscriptions for this charity, which ultimately grew to greater dimensions than he foresaw.

Another enterprise of historic interest he began as well as finished. It was an important step toward the formation of a separate denomination, though he entertained no design beyond the supply of an immediate want. The awakening, conversion, and addition of so large a number of persons to the religious societies in Bristol made necessary a larger room, in which they might assemble together for worship. A piece of ground was procured near St. James's church-yard, Broadmead, and the first stone was laid May 12th, 1739, "with the voice of praise and thanksgiving." Wesley says: "I had not at first the least apprehension or design of being personally engaged either in the expense of the building or in the direction of it;" he having appointed eleven feoffees (trustees), by whom the burdens should be borne. But it soon appeared that the work would be at a stand if he did not take upon himself the payment of the workmen; and he was presently encumbered with a debt of more than £150. The subscription of the Bristol societies did not amount to a fourth part of that sum. In another and more important point, his friends in London, and Whitefield especially, had been farther-sighted than himself; they represented to him that the trustees would always have it in their power to turn him out of the room after he had built it, if he did not preach to their liking; and they declared that they would have nothing to do with the building, nor contribute any thing toward it, unless he instantly discharged all trustees, and did every thing in his own name.

Though Wesley had not foreseen this consequence, he immediately perceived the wisdom of his friends' advice, and to avoid the evils of congregational fickleness and tyranny, he called together the trustees, canceled the writings without any opposition on their part, and took the whole trust, as well as the whole management, into his own hands. "Money," he says, "it is true, I had not, nor any human prospect or probability of procuring it; but I knew 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;' and in his name set out, nothing doubting." This was a matter of great importance, for in this manner nearly all the chapels erected in the early part of his career were vested in him; a thing involving serious responsibility, which was honorably fulfilled; for trusts were afterward created, and by the "Deed of Declaration" all his interests in his chapels were transferred to the Legal Conference. Connectional Methodism, in Europe and America, is vastly indebted to the conservative principle here introduced. Church-houses are not the property of individuals, or societies, or corporations, but are held for the use of such a ministry as the Conference, representing the whole Church, may authorize and appoint. Local defections cannot close them, nor pervert them from their original design.\*

The Religious Societies often mentioned arose about the year 1667 out of an awakening that began under three pious clergymen† in London, and extended to other parts of the land. The Church of that day not affording suitable help and fellowship for the earnest seekers after salvation, they were advised by those whose ministry had been quickening and profitable to their souls "to meet together once a week, and to apply themselves to good discourse and things wherein they might edify one another." They acted upon this advice, and at every meeting made a collection for the poor. By means of the fund thus provided, numbers of poor families were relieved, sundry prisoners were set at liberty by the payment of small debts, several orphans were maintained, and a few poor scholars received assistance. These

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\* Decisions in the Court of Chancery, made under this "Deed of Declaration," have given security to the property and stability to the whole economy of Wesleyan Methodism in Great Britain; and similar proceedings in American courts have settled this principle—that trustees and congregations may rebel or secede, but the Church-property remains for the use of the Church.

† Horneck, Smithies, and Beveridge.

converted persons soon found the benefit of their weekly conferences with each other. Each person related his religious experience to the rest, and thus they became the means of building themselves up in the faith of Christ. Rules were drawn up "for the better regulation of the meetings." These religious associations at one time numbered about forty in the metropolis and its vicinity. By the rules of the weekly meetings they were required to discourse only on such subjects as tended to "practical holiness, and to avoid controversy." For awhile these societies prospered greatly. Out of their religious influence and the zeal thus awakened, no less than twenty associations for the prosecution and suppression of vice seem to have arisen, which were favored by several bishops, and countenanced by the queen herself. They had been the means of keeping the spark of piety from entire extinction. But after the lapse of some years they declined, so that when Wesley commenced his evangelizing labors, although several societies still existed in London, Bristol, Dublin, and some other places, they were by no means in a state of vigor and activity. The law of moral affinity drew the Methodists to them. In their rooms and meetings in London, Bristol, and elsewhere, Whitefield and the Wesley brothers, for a few years, were accustomed to read and explain the Scriptures almost every night. They served them much the same purpose the synagogues did the first missionaries to the Gentiles—as a base of operations for beginning their work. Useful as were the Religious Societies, with their narrow and retired quarters, Methodism had outgrown that provisional arrangement in Bristol as soon also it did elsewhere; for the societies were isolated, not united; they were at the service of Methodists, but could not be under their control.

The Fetter-lane Society seems to have been like and yet unlike the others. On May 1, Wesley and a few others formed themselves into a society which met there. The rules were printed under the title of "Orders of a Religious Society, meeting in Fetter-lane; in obedience to the command of God by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Böhler. 1738." Band-rules, and other arrangements for Christian fellowship and mutual edification, on the Moravian plan, were adopted. Many seasons of great grace were enjoyed there. Monday night, after his return from Germany, Wesley's journal has this item: "I rejoiced to



meet our little society, which now consisted of thirty-two persons." Methodists and Moravians composed this society which professed to be in union with the Church of England, and went as a body, accompanied by the two Wesleys, to St. Paul's Cathedral, to receive the holy communion. But a learned mystic came in, while Wesley was at Bristol, and taught new-fangled doctrines. A man very different from Böhler was this Molther. "German stillness" stole away the hearts of the people; solifidianism and a contempt of Church orders and of Bible ordinances were openly inculcated. Separation—as we shall see—finally ensued. The Methodist element drew off and "went to their own company," and the Moravian element of the original Fetter-lane Society drew off in another direction, and from this time assumed the character of a distinct community belonging to the Church of the United Brethren.\* This proved to be an important step in the direction of a distinct, homogeneous denomination representing well-defined and vital doctrines, though such consequence was not intended at the time.

Wesley had spent part of November in London, endeavoring to compose dissensions in Fetter-lane; and whilst there, two gentlemen, then unknown to him, urged him to preach in a place called the Foundry, near Moorfields. He writes: "Sunday, November 11, I preached at eight to five or six thousand, on the spirit of bondage and the spirit of adoption; and at five in the evening to seven or eight thousand, in the place which had been the king's foundry for cannon." He was then pressed to take the place into his own hands. He did so. The purchase-money was £115; but the building being a "vast, uncouth heap of ruins," a large sum additional to this had to be expended in needful repairs; and at least £800 was raised, by systematic and hard begging, during the next few years, to pay for this cathedral of Methodism.† The band-room was behind the chapel, on the ground-floor, eighty feet long and twenty feet wide. Here the classes met; here, in winter, the five o'clock morning service was conducted; and here were held, at two o'clock, on Wednesdays and Fridays, weekly meetings for prayer. The north end of the room was used for a school, and was fitted up with desks; and at the south end was "The Book Room," for the sale

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\*Jackson's Life of C. Wesley. †Tyerman.

of Methodist publications. Over the band-room were apartments for Wesley, in which his mother spent her last years and died; and at the end of the chapel was a dwelling-house for his domestics and assistant preachers. The edifice had been a ruin for twenty years. In recasting the injured guns taken from the French in the campaigns of Marlborough, a terrible explosion blew off the roof, shook the building, and killed several of the workmen. This led to its abandonment, and the removal of the royal foundry to Woolwich. Here was really the cradle of Methodism. At Bristol the first Methodist church was begun and built. The Foundry was the first one opened for worship. Wesley says, in his introduction to the "General Rules of the Society:" "In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London and desired that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come. This was the rise of the United Society." Twelve came the first night, forty the next, and soon after a hundred. While the controversy respecting the ordinances—which led to a separation from the Moravians—was going on, the Wesleys still preached to vast audiences, and with undiminished success. Conversions were numerous, and the society connected with the Foundry increased continually. Commenced about the end of November with twelve members, by the middle of June following it had increased to three hundred. The epochal events of this year justified the world-wide centenary solemnities of 1839.

Methodism now has two churches and a school-house, access to the little "rooms" of the Religious Societies here and there, and all outdoors, to preach in. The movement widens and takes shape. Its leaders are building wiser than they know, for they really love the Established Church, and have no thought of cutting loose from it. Under Providence, they meet the necessities which success creates, are detached from surroundings, and are drifting toward a compact and consistent organism. One possible danger hangs vaguely over the heads of the leaders—suspension or excommunication. According to the canons of the Church, no minister is allowed to preach outside of his parish without official leave. The bishop of a diocese must give license therein, or the preacher is an intruder. This canon had fallen into disuse—*sub silentio*—but it might be revived. Whitefield at Bristol, was threatened with it. He boldly reminded the author of the

official menace that another canon forbade his ministers from frequenting ale-houses and playing cards, and from other unministerial, if not unchristian, practices. Why was not *that* canon enforced? And Whitefield thundered in his field-pulpit the same day. The Bishop of London was displeased at the "irregularities" of the Methodist preachers, and said to Charles Wesley: "I have power to inhibit you." He promptly made the issue: "Does your lordship exert that power? Do you now inhibit me?" The reply was: "O why will you push me to an extreme? I do not inhibit you." After having elicited from the learned prelate that, in his opinion, the Religious Societies to which they preached were not conventicles, the poet-preacher went his way.

John Wesley was often importuned to narrow his circle of operations by taking a curacy or settling at the university. Even good men queried: Why this going about and singing psalms, and expounding, and gathering assemblies, in other men's parishes? An entry in his journal at this time points to similar interviews:

For two hours I took up my cross, in arguing with a zealous man, and laboring to convince him that I was not an enemy of the Church of England. He allowed I taught no other doctrines than those of the Church, but could not forgive my teaching them out of the church-walls. He allowed, too (which none indeed can deny who has either any regard to truth or sense of shame), that "by this teaching many souls who, till that time, were 'perishing for lack of knowledge,' have been, and are brought, 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'" But he added: "No one can tell what may be hereafter; and therefore I say these things ought not to be suffered."

Honest, zealous man, believing that the salvation of souls is too dearly bought if done by a departure from Church-usages'—forgetting that Christianity, though conserved by Church-order, does not exist for the sake of it. When, by one he was bound to respect and give an answer to, Wesley was urged to settle in a college, or to accept a cure of souls, he replied: "I have no business at college, having now no office and no pupils; and it will be time enough to consider whether I ought to accept a cure of souls when one is offered to me. On scriptural grounds, I do not think it hard to justify what I am doing. God, in Scripture, commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another's parish; that is, in effect, not to do it at all, see.

ing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom, then, shall I hear? God or man? If it be just to obey man rather than God, judge ye. I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation." Such was the position taken by Wesley and his co-workers. His spirit was strong in the consciousness of the moral power he was wielding by the word of God. On one occasion, he says, his soul was so enlarged that he could have cried out, in a higher sense than Archimedes, "Give me where to stand, and I will move the world."

Samuel Wesley, deprecating the irregular evangelism of his brother, wrote to his mother: "I am not afraid the Church should excommunicate him (discipline is at too low an ebb), but that he should excommunicate the Church. It is pretty near it." One compensation in the case of a lifeless Church is that the decay of discipline—an early symptom—has left it without power to resist the unusual measures which may be necessary for its renovation. At a time when dram-drinking and absentee rectors were common, and when heterodoxy, and even a thinly disguised infidelity, tainted some who were enjoying preferments, it would hardly do to revive an obsolete canon against men whose fault was that they preached the gospel to more people out-of-doors than scores of beneficed clergymen preached to within church-walls; that they taught the poor and visited the prisons, and constantly appealed to the articles and homilies of the Church for the truth of their doctrines—men of cultured minds and commanding eloquence and blameless lives. To excommunicate them was more than a hierarchy, strong and proud, but in some degree responsible to public opinion, could venture to do or seriously threaten.

The Methodists now felt the ground firm under them so far as ecclesiastical interference was concerned, and another forward movement was made, very shocking to primates and priests—the introduction of lay preachers. The fields were white to the harvest, and the laborers few. Wesley could not forbid an increase of the staff, because the new workers had not been trained in colleges, and came without surplices, and gowns. No doubt he would have preferred the employment of clerics like himself; but,

in the absence of such, he was driven to adopt the measure which Providence presented, and which the Holy Spirit honored abundantly. His mission was to the *people*, and from the people the Lord furnished a ministry that sympathized with them, and could be understood by them. Again Church-order gave way to the higher necessity of saving souls. "I knew your brother well," said Robinson, the Archbishop of Armagh, when he met Charles Wesley at the Hotwells, Bristol. "I could never credit all I heard respecting him and you; but one thing in your conduct I could never account for—your employing laymen." "My lord," said Charles, "the fault is yours and your brethren's." "How so?" asked the primate. "Because you hold your peace, and the stones cry out." "But I am told," his Grace continued, "that they are unlearned men." "Some are," said the sprightly poet; "and so the dumb ass rebukes the prophet." His lordship said no more.\*

The New Room at Bristol, as the first Methodist meeting-house was called, was opened, and Wesley expounded and preached there daily. Of the moral condition of the congregation he wrote before leaving: "Convictions sink deeper and deeper; love and joy are more calm, even, and steady." Charles, who had been pastor of the Foundry for several months, and conjointly with Molther and others of Fetter-lane, now changed places with his brother. Wearied with the wranglings that had broken out in that Union Society about "stillness" and the ordinances, Charles was refreshed at Bristol, and especially at Kingswood. "O what simplicity," he exclaims, "is in this child-like people! A spirit of contrition and love ran through them. Here the seed has fallen upon good ground." And again, on the next Sabbath: "I went to learn Christ among our colliers, and drank into their spirit. We rejoiced for the consolation. O that our London brethren would come to school to Kingswood! These *are* what they *pretend* to be. God knows their poverty; but they are rich, and daily entering into rest, without being first brought into confusion. They do not hold it necessary to deny the weak faith in order to get the strong. Their soul truly waiteth *still* upon God, in the way of his ordinances. Ye many masters, come, learn Christ of these outcasts; for know, 'except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

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\*The Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley, M.A.

After repeated interviews and patient waiting, John Wesley saw that the Moravian trouble had but one solution. There was no hope of those who controlled the London Society, whatever the Brethren might be elsewhere. All was confusion. Vain janglings had done their work. The learned, subtle German mystic had his notions and clung to them, and the majority at Fetter-lane were of his way of thinking. Wesley's journal, in April, shows progress:

My brother and I went to Mr. Molther again, and spent two hours in conversation with him. He now also explicitly affirmed: 1. That there are *no degrees* in faith; that none has any faith who has ever any doubt or fear; and that none is justified till he has a clean heart, with the perpetual indwelling of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. And, 2. That every one who has not this ought, till he has it, to be *still*—that is, as he explained it, not to use the ordinances, or means of grace, so called. He also expressly asserted that to those who have a clean heart the ordinances are not a matter of duty. They are not commanded to use them; they are free; they may use them, or they may not.

Often Wesley expounded in Fetter-lane, laboring to bring them to another mind on these and cognate points, showing how unwilling he was to part with them. One who had been as a pillar “spoke largely of the great danger that attended the doing of outward works, and of the folly of people that keep running about to church and sacrament, ‘as I,’ said he, ‘did till very lately.’” Another, whose influence was weighty, stood up in meeting and asserted, in plain terms: “1. That, till they had true faith, they ought to be still—that is (as they explained themselves), to abstain from the means of grace, as they are called; the Lord's Supper in particular. 2. That the ordinances are not means of grace, there being no other means than Christ.”

Neglecting church and sermons was one of the peculiarities of this strange heresy. Once Charles Wesley invited a small company of the new faith to go with him to the house of God. The spokesman replied for himself and the rest, as they settled themselves down: “It is good for us to be *here*.”

After a long conference with leading ones, even including Spangenberg, and yielding all he could for peace, Wesley records:

But I could not agree, either, that none has any faith, so long as he is liable to any doubt or fear; or that, till we have it, we ought to abstain from the Lord's Supper, or the other ordinances of God. At eight, our society met at Fetter-lane. We sat an hour without speaking. The rest of the time was spent in dispute; one having proposed a question concerning the Lord's Supper, which many warmly

affirmed none ought to receive till he had "the full assurance of faith." I observed every day more and more the advantage Satan had gained over us. Many were induced to deny the gift of God, and affirm that they never had any faith at all; and almost all these had left off the means of grace, saying they must now cease from their own works; they must now trust in Christ alone; they were poor sinners, and had nothing to do but to lie at his feet.

Again, from the same journal, in June:

I took occasion to speak of the ordinances of God, as they are means of grace. Although this expression of our Church, "means of grace," be not found in Scripture, yet, if the sense of it undeniably is, to cavil at the term is a mere strife of words. But the sense of it is undeniably found in Scripture. For God hath in Scripture ordained prayer, reading or hearing, and the receiving the Lord's Supper, as the ordinary means of conveying his grace to man. And first, prayer. For thus saith the Lord: "Ask, and it shall be given you. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." Here God plainly ordains prayer, as the means of receiving whatsoever grace we want. Here is no restriction as to believers or unbelievers; but least of all as to unbelievers, for such doubtless were most of those to whom he said, "Ask, and it shall be given you."

"Do this in remembrance of me." In the ancient Church, every one who was baptized communicated daily. So in the Acts we read, They "all continued daily in the breaking of bread, and in prayer." But in latter times, many have affirmed that the Lord's Supper is not a converting but a confirming ordinance. I showed, concerning the Holy Scriptures, that to search (that is, read and hear) them is a command of God; that this command is given to all, believers or unbelievers.

Wesley labored with them further by adducing instances of sincere seekers having been consciously pardoned—really received the atonement—in the act of receiving the Lord's Supper. Faith to lay hold of the promise was strengthened, and the inward grace came to them with the outward sign.

A hard day's work done at field-preaching, he visits them again: "Several of our brethren, of Fetter-lane, being met in the evening, Mr. S—— told them that I had been preaching up the works of the law; 'which,' added Mr. V——, 'we believers are no more bound to obey than the subjects of the King of England are bound to obey the laws of the King of France.'" No wonder Wesley exclaimed that he was "sick of such sublime divinity." After prayerful counsel the next week, he wrote down what he conceived to be the difference between them:

As to faith, you believe: 1. There are no degrees of faith; and that no man has any degree of it, before all things in him are become new, before he has the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit, or the clear perception that Christ dwelleth in him. 2. Accordingly, you believe there is no justifying faith, or state of justification, short of this.

Whereas I believe: 1. There are degrees of faith; and that a man may have some degree of it, before all things in him are become new, before he has the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit, or the clear perception that Christ dwelleth in him. 2. Accordingly, I believe there is a degree of justifying faith (and, consequently, a state of justification) short of, and commonly antecedent to, this.

As to the way of faith, you believe: That the way to attain it is to wait for Christ, and be still—that is, not to use (what we term) the means of grace; not to go to church; not to communicate; not to fast; not to use so much as private prayer; not to read the Scripture (because you believe these are not means of grace—that is, do not ordinarily convey God's grace to unbelievers; and that it is impossible for a man to use them without trusting in them); not to do temporal good; nor to attempt doing spiritual good.

Whereas I believe: The way to attain it is to wait for Christ, and be still, in using all the means of grace. Therefore I believe it right, for him who knows he has not faith (that is, that conquering faith), to go to church; to communicate; to fast; to use as much private prayer as he can; and to read the Scripture (because I believe these are 'means of grace'—that is, do ordinarily convey God's grace to unbelievers; and that it is possible for a man to use them, without trusting in them); to do all the temporal good he can; and endeavor to do spiritual good.

These business-like statements were deliberately made and considered, and the result soon followed.

"One evening [July 20]," he says, "I went to the love-feast in Fetter-lane; at the conclusion of which, having said nothing till then, I read a paper, the substance whereof was as follows:

"'About nine months ago certain of you began to speak contrary to the doctrine we had till then received. The sum of what you assert is this: 1. That there is no such thing as *weak faith*; that there is no justifying faith where there is ever any doubt or fear, or where there is not, in the full sense, a new, clean heart. 2. That a man ought not to use those ordinances of God, which our Church terms "means of grace," before he has such a faith as excludes all doubt and fear, and implies a new, a clean heart.

"'You have often affirmed that to search the Scriptures, to pray, or to communicate, before we have this faith, is to seek salvation by works; and that till these works are laid aside, no man can receive faith. I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the law and the testimony. I have borne with you long, hoping you would turn. But as I find you more and more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment, follow me.'"



He then, without saying any thing more, withdrew, as did eighteen or nineteen of the society. "We gathered up," says Charles Wesley, "our wreck (*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*) floating here and there on the vast abyss, for nine out of ten were swallowed up in the dead sea of stillness. O why was not this done six months ago? How fatal was our delay and false moderation!"

The journal of Wednesday following says: "Our little company met at the Foundry, instead of Fetter-lane. About twenty-five of our brethren God hath given us already, all of whom think and speak the same thing; seven or eight and forty likewise, of the fifty women that were in the band, desired to cast in their lot with us." Fetter-lane became now, and continued, the head-quarters of the Brethren in London. Molther, who had put forth in revolting yet seducing manner the disturbing tenets, was withdrawn. His successors, without disavowing his teaching, pursued a conciliatory course. The opinion, perhaps, is just that the English branch of Moravianism, at this time, was not true to the original stock. Gradually a better understanding grew up, and friends at first were friends again at last. It was fortunate that the separation came when it did; otherwise, Methodism might have been entangled with, if not absorbed into, an older but feebler and less aggressive body.

At this distance it is difficult to realize how serious that trouble was. Many of the first converts of the Wesleys were in the Fetter-lane Society, and were carried away. The insidious evil was eating its way into the body. The stream was about to be corrupted at its source. It was a mighty advantage to the Wesleys, in this emergency, that they had the Foundry in their own hands. Here they lifted up the warning voice against sin, and every form of error, in the presence of people who not unfrequently crowded the place both within and without; some inquiring what they must do to be saved, and others wishful to know whether or not there were any means of grace.

That fine hymn "Long have I seemed to serve thee, Lord," was written by Charles Wesley in the midst of these disputes. It guards against both extremes, and embodies those just views on the subject which the brothers steadily maintained to the end of their lives. He used to call upon the right-minded people in his congregations at the Foundry to unite with him in singing it; and it is difficult to conceive how any enlightened Christian

could refuse to join in the holy exercise. Its effect under the circumstances must have been powerful. John Wesley's sermon on "The Means of Grace"—exhaustive and practical—was preached about this time.\*

A high authority in Wesleyan history fixes July 20, 1740, as "in strict propriety the real commencement of the Methodist Societies." Wesley, indeed, speaks of four other epochs, each of which may be regarded as a new development. The first of these was the rise of student Methodism, when, in 1729, four serious students began to meet together at Oxford. The second epoch was in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons began to meet in Wesley's house at Savannah. The third was May 1, 1738, when, by the advice of Peter Böhler, Wesley and other serious persons began to meet in Fetter-lane. Again: "In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London, and desired that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; this was the rise of the UNITED SOCIETY." Yet, even at this last-named period, Wesley was connected with the Fetter-lane Society and the Moravians; so that the Society formed by him in 1739 did not stand out as a separate and distinct religious body. But after Sunday, July 20th, 1740, all the initiatory stages of an orthodox, homogeneous, and self-governing body had been passed through, and there was (in its infancy, indeed, but having a separate existence and action) a Wesleyan Methodist Society. Not that it was known by that name—it was not; "but from that germ the Wesleyan Society has grown, and no other change has passed upon it, except from small to great, from few to many, from weak to strong, from a rudimental condition to one of full development. The Society then formed at the Foundry has remained, by a continual accession of new members, to the present time."†

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\* Sermon No. XVI. † History of Wesleyan Methodism, Geo. Smith, F.A.S.

## CHAPTER XIV

Lay Preaching: How Begun; Its Necessity and Right—Conservatism Inwrought into Methodism—Qualification of the “Unlearned” Preacher.

NEW fields were occupied; the work enlarged; there was no retreating; but where are the preachers to come from to sustain the movement? The Lord will provide. In his absence from London, Wesley appointed a young layman—Thomas Maxfield—to hold prayer-meetings, to exhort, and give spiritual advice, as they might need it, to the people who met at the Foundry. Being fervent in spirit and mighty in the Scriptures, he greatly profited the people. They crowded to hear him, and by the increase of their number, as well as by their earnest and deep attention, they led him insensibly to go farther than he had at first designed. He began to preach, and the Lord so blessed the word that many were brought to repentance and a consciousness of pardon. The Scripture marks of true conversion evinced the work to be of God. Some were offended at this irregularity. A complaint was made to Wesley, and he hastened to London to put a stop to it. His mother then lived in his house, adjoining to the Foundry. When he arrived, she perceived that his countenance was expressive of dissatisfaction, and inquired the cause. “Thomas Maxfield,” said he abruptly, “has turned preacher, I find.” She looked attentively at him, and replied: “John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favoring readily any thing of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself.” He did so. His prejudice bowed before the force of truth, and he could only say, “It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.” Afterward, some of those young men who had thus begun to preach offered themselves to assist their father in the gospel, by preaching wherever he might appoint them. Maxfield, Richards, Westall, John Nelson, Joseph Humphries, at first, and then a host of other *itinerants*, came forward in the course of time. Wesley said, “I durst not refuse their assistance.” Lay preaching was

a part of Methodism; indeed, without it there would have been no Methodism larger and more lasting than the Religious Societies of the former century; but bringing into the field that mighty arm of gospel service was unpremeditated by Wesley. It was contrary to all his previous views, and he submitted to it as to a manifestation of the Divine will. "If he erred at all in this matter," says a high Wesleyan authority, "it was not in the way of innovation, but by an improper adherence to the practice of the Church of England in refusing to allow such men, although so clearly called of God, to administer the sacraments, because they were not episcopally ordained. Yet to this practice he did adhere, although he could not defend it on scriptural grounds."\*

It is safe to assume the reproductive power of the gospel. Wherever souls are converted under preaching, among the converts will be found some who are called of the Holy Spirit and qualified to preach. "Wesley," continues the same author, "was not embarrassed for want of fellow-laborers, by the barrenness of his converts, and the paucity of spiritual gifts among them. Seldom has the Church seen persons more richly endowed with all the qualifications essential to spiritual usefulness. He had men among his sons in the gospel qualified for every kind of ministerial duty, but nothing except a clear providential call could induce him to depart so far from the order of the Established Church as to give his sanction to the preaching of laymen in his societies."†

Lay preaching, like lay baptism, has about it the ill odor of apostolic succession. If the term be used to distinguish between persons separated to preaching and the pastoral care, and others who, while licensed to preach, follow secular pursuits, and are not amenable to the laws and usages regulating the labors of those under vows to "devote themselves wholly to God and his work"—utility may justify its employment.‡ But the term was long applied to men who were devoting themselves wholly to God and his work; who annually received appointments to pastoral care; who were models of ministerial fidelity and propriety; and whose gifts, graces, and usefulness would have adorned any age of the Church. Wesley had to move slowly. The pressure was great on both sides: on one, he was blamed for allowing lay

\* Smith's History of Wesley and his Times. † Ibid. ‡ The terms in general use among Methodists are better—*traveling* and *local* preachers.

preachers at all; on the other, for not allowing those under whose ministry congregations were gathered and edified, and souls converted, to go farther, and administer to them the sacraments as well as the word. Watson pronounces his defense of himself on the first point "irrefutable;" and it turns upon the disappointment of his hopes that the parochial clergy would take the charge of those who in different places had been brought to God by his ministry and that of his fellow-laborers. These are Wesley's words:

It pleased God, by two or three ministers of the Church of England, to call many sinners to repentance, who in several parts were undeniably turned from a course of sin to a course of holiness. The ministers of the places where this was done ought to have taken those persons who had just begun to serve God into their particular care, watching over them in tender love, lest they should fall back into the snare of the devil. And how did they watch over the sinners lately reformed? Even as a leopard watcheth over his prey. They drove some of them from the Lord's table; to which till now they had no desire to approach. They preached all manner of evil concerning them, openly cursing them in the name of the Lord. They turned many out of their work, persuaded others to do so too, and harassed them in all manner of ways. When the ministers, by whom God had helped them before, came again to those places, great part of their work was to begin again, if it could be begun again; but the relapsers were often so hardened in sin that no impression could be made upon them. What could they do in a case of so extreme necessity, where so many souls lay at stake?

"God," says Watson, "had given him large fruits of his ministry in various places. When he was absent from them, the people were 'as sheep having no shepherd,' or were rather persecuted by their natural pastors, the clergy; he was reduced, therefore, to the necessity of leaving them without religious care, or of providing it for them.' He wisely chose the latter; but, true to his own principles, and even prejudices, he carried this no farther than the necessity of the case; the hours of service were in no instance to interfere with those of the Establishment, and at the parish church the members were exhorted to communicate. Mr. Wesley resisted all attempts at a formal separation, still hoping that a more friendly spirit would spring up among the clergy; and he even pressed hard upon the consciences of his people to effect their uniform and constant attendance at their parish churches and at the sacrament; but he could not long and generally succeed. The effect was, that long before his death the attendance of the Methodists at such parish churches as had not pious ministers was exceeding scanty; and as they were not

permitted public worship among themselves in the hours of Church service, a great part of the Sabbath was lost to them, except as they employed it in family and private exercises. So also as to the Lord's Supper: as it was not then administered by their own ministers, it fell into great and painful neglect."

This soon came to be, among the Methodists, the question of the day. The attempt to force them to an attendance upon the services of the Established Church, by refusing to them the sacraments from their own preachers, and by closing their chapels during the Sabbath, except early in the morning and in the evening, drove many of them into a state of actual separation both from the State Church and their own societies, and placed them in the hands of Dissenters. It required uncommon meekness for men, after hearing a sermon that railed at them and their teachers, to kneel at the chancel, with bruises on their bodies, and receive the sacrament from the hands of a clergyman who had set the mob on them. Charles Wesley did his best, especially at Bristol and London, to supply the sacrament to the Methodists; but this partial or local accommodation only made the dissatisfaction greater in other places. His High-church feelings could hardly endure the innovation of lay preaching; but the administration of the sacraments by men not episcopally ordained was quite out of the question; it would make Dissenters out of them *ipso facto*, and bring on separation! He wrote to John Nelson: "John, I love thee from my heart; yet, rather than see thee a Dissenting minister, I wish to see thee smiling in thy coffin." Whitefield, when doing his glorious work among the neglected colliers at Kingswood, complains that "while he was thus employed some of the clergy in Bristol inveighed against him from their pulpits with great vehemence, and others complained bitterly of the intolerable increase of their labor when he brought large companies of reclaimed profligates to the churches to receive the Lord's Supper." Charles Wesley had recorded under date of Oct. 13, 1740, Bristol—several years before he wrote the above to John Nelson: "I waited with my brother upon a minister, about baptizing some of his parish. He complained heavily of the multitude of our communicants, and produced the canon against strangers. He could not admit *that* as a reason for their coming to his church—that they had no sacrament at their own. I offered my assistance to lessen his *trouble*, but he

declined it. There were a hundred new communicants, he told us, last Sunday; and he added: 'I am credibly informed some of them came out of spite to me.' Yet this good man—this primitive Methodist—was so wedded to the Established Church that unless John Nelson, and others like him, could be "episcopally ordained" he would rather see John "smiling in his coffin" than upon a presbyterial ordination administering baptism or the Lord's Supper to a Methodist congregation. How groundless and absurd the theory, popular in certain quarters, that "ambition" was at the bottom of the Methodist movement!

One is tempted to impatience at such conservatism. Providentially led, the founder of Methodism was careful not at any time to get ahead of Providence; for whoever does that will often be compelled to retrace his steps. Wesley moved slowly—perhaps it is well that he did. At this stage of the case, he writes defensively of those God had given him:

It is true that in *ordinary* cases both an *inward* and an *outward* call are requisite. But we apprehend there is something far from *ordinary* in the present case; and upon the calmest view of things we think they who are only called of God, and not of man, have *more* right to preach than they who are only called of man, and not of God. Now, that many of the clergy, though called of man, are not called of God to preach his gospel is undeniable: 1. Because they themselves utterly disclaim—nay, and ridicule—the inward call. 2. Because they do not know what the gospel is; of consequence, they *do not* and *cannot* preach it. This, at present, is my chief embarrassment. That I have not gone too far yet, I know; but whether I have gone far enough, I am extremely doubtful. I see those running whom God hath not sent; destroying their own souls and those that hear them. Unless I warn, in all ways I can, these perishing souls of their danger, am I clear of the blood of these men? Soul-damning clergymen lay me under more difficulties than soul-saving laymen!

But why were not soul-saving laymen "called of man" at this time, as well as of God? Why were they not then ordained to the full work of the ministry? Here we encounter the fable of apostolic succession, of which Wesley had not yet rid himself; also another difficulty, which we cannot help respecting—a regard for the order of things long established; a reluctance at innovation; a constitutional dislike of revolution. The men who easily give up convictions, and even prejudices, on fundamental matters, and are ever ready for radical changes, are not the kind of instruments for working solid and enduring reformatations. Conservatism in revolution is a rare and valuable factor. It creates and transmits to the organization that follows the subtle

power of stability. "It is manifest that in neglect or contempt of order, Christianity could not have been handed down from age to age; but unless once and again order had given way to a higher necessity, the gospel must by this time have lain deep buried beneath the corrupt accumulations of eighteen hundred years. Yet it is a fact worthy of all regard that when Heaven sends its own chosen men to bring about needed reformatations, at the cost of a momentary anarchy, it does not give any such commission as this to those who by temper are anarchists." \*

By and by the Wesleyan organization in Europe and America was completed; but its consistency and stability and strength are largely due to cautious and slow steps. No man in England or the Colonies was bound by law or conscience to the State Church—the connection was purely voluntary. Yet, Methodists did not hastily quit it. A conservative habit; subordination to lawful power; love of order; respect for constituted authorities, so long as they can possibly serve the purpose for which they were constituted—this has been a heritage of Methodism. If the fathers were too wise and too practical to put new wine into the old bottles of succession and a national hierarchy, they first tried the old bottles to see if they would do; and after being thoroughly satisfied of their incapacity and unavailability, they laid aside the leaky leathern bags respectfully, if not regretfully.

It was well enough that the founder of Methodism labored to put the fruit of an evangelical ministry under the care of pastors already licensed, and to keep the revival inside the Church where it was needed, and in which he had been bred up and ordained; but the priests and prelates could not see the opportunity; their eyes were holden. "We will not *go out*," said Wesley; "if we are *thrust out*, well." It was well enough that he asked the Bishop of London, once and again, to ordain Methodist preachers for America—men by every token fit for the field; his lordship, by the letter of the law, held "jurisdiction" in the Colonies. He refused, and thereby deprived Methodism of all that the Established Church gained by his refusal—exactly nothing. When the time was fully come in which no question of jurisdiction could be raised, Wesley exercised the scriptural right of ordaining men for America. He respected the "jurisdiction" so long as it had any show of existence.

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\* Wesley and Methodism.



Lay preachers, so called, and their people, endured with singular patience; it was homage done to even the appearance of law and order. Their self-denial had its reward. The attestation of Heaven not only justified but demanded the measures subsequently taken. By their fruit ye shall know them. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.

"But I am told that they are unlearned men," said the Archbishop of Armagh to Charles Wesley at the Hotwells, when objecting to lay preachers. Charles turned the point neatly, but his brother would have answered his Grace on the merits of the question. In these well-known words, John would have repelled the charge of ignorance brought against his preachers: "In one thing which they profess to know, they are *not* ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the university—I speak it with sorrow and shame—are able to do."

Would not Thomas Walsh or Robert Strawbridge, and scores of Irish Methodist preachers, have excelled the archbishop himself in teaching the way of salvation to an average thousand of Irishmen? Stripped of the adventitious importance of his office, would not they have commanded the attention of a multitude—taking people as they are found—as well as he?

Wise master-builders are needed; but few people would dwell in houses, if none but master-builders were to help build them. Many a workman does well on the wall who has not the skill to lay off a foundation, to turn an arch, or to carry up a corner. It is as unphilosophical as unscriptural to allow no one to preach the gospel until he can properly be styled "learned." A man whose literary education falls far below that standard may nevertheless, in knowledge and experience, be sufficiently in advance of multitudes of hearers to guide and teach them in religion, to their infinite profit. Methodism is a friend of learning; it gave "the first impulse to popular education" in the last century; it encourages all ministers to reach the highest attainments in knowledge, and has always been able to show a fair proportion of men in the ranks of the "learned;" but Methodism never committed the blunder, the crime against destitute regions and perishing souls, of saying that none but "learned" men shall be allowed to preach the gospel. The Christian ministry must have

Greek and Hebrew scholars; but that all Christian ministers must be Greek and Hebrew scholars does not follow. The link connecting such a conclusion with that premise no logician ever has found or can find.

The following are the practical, scriptural tests upon which the Methodist ministry has been ordained. They were adopted at the beginning, and they are the standard now:

*Ques.* 1. How shall we try those who profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

*Ans.* Let them be asked the following questions, namely:

1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding, a right judgment in the things of God, a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin and converted to God by their preaching?

As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved by the Holy Ghost.

It has been well remarked that "no man could give satisfactory replies to these questions unless he were truly pious and really called of God to preach his gospel." No candidate for a medical or legal diploma, no applicant for a naval or military or civil commission, can afford stronger proofs of suitable capacity for the situation he seeks, than such affirmative answers afford that a man is divinely called to the work of the ministry. Wesley did not look for precedents; he did not appeal to ecclesiastical history; he rightly judged that if a "layman" had never preached before, the layman in whom these evidences were found was entitled to belief, when he professed "to be moved by the Holy Ghost to preach."

## CHAPTER XV

Whitefield Returns to America—Lays the First Brick of the Orphan-house—An Old Friend—Concerning the Collection—Success of his Ministry—"Poor Richard" gives the Contents of his Wallet—Separation between Wesley and Whitefield—Painful Facts—Profitable Consequences.

WHITEFIELD'S visit of nine months to England resulted in the inauguration of field-preaching and a liberal collection for the Georgia orphanage. He landed at Philadelphia in November, and sending forward his company to Savannah, he himself went "ranging."

He never preached with more power and success than during the next few months. In Philadelphia it is a small thing to say that the churches overflowed twice a day; the awakening was shown in part by "twenty-six societies for social prayer and religious conference," established in the city. He visited New York, and the word of the Lord was mighty among the people. In New Jersey his ministry was attended with great blessing. He met the Blairs, Tennents, and others, and formed a loving friendship for these evangelical men. His journal thus notices the beginnings of Princeton College (Nov. 22):

Mr. Tennent and his brethren in presbytery intend breeding up gracious youths for our Lord's vineyard. The place wherein the young men now study is a log-house, about twenty feet long, and nearly as many broad. From this despised place seven or eight worthy ministers of Jesus have been sent forth, and a foundation is now laying for the instruction of many others. The work, I am persuaded, is of God, and therefore will not come to naught.

Whitefield's tour southward was a string of appointments. Wilmington, Annapolis, and other places, heard him gladly. At one meeting-house in the woods he "observed new scenes of field-preaching"—the congregation being rated at not less than ten thousand. People came twenty miles to hear. In Virginia he met Commissary Blair at Williamsburg, and was "courteously entreated" by him and the governor; of course he preached to the *élite* of the Old Dominion at the capitol there.

William and Mary College, chartered and in part endowed by the sovereigns whose name it bears, was there. Early in the century, a commencement was held at the college. Planters came in

coaches; others in vessels from New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland—"it being a new thing in that part of America to hear graduates perform their exercises." A few miles distant was Jamestown, where the first English settlement on our Continent was made in 1607. Parish priest and prayer-book started out with the colony, and for a century and a quarter the Established Church had held sway in Virginia, sternly repressing Dissenters. As early as 1671, Gov. Berkeley wrote: "We have forty-eight parishes, and our ministers are well paid, and by my consent should be better if they would pray oftener and preach less. But of all other commodities, so of this, the worst are sent to us." Being under an episcopal regimen, with the bishop three thousand miles off, the churches showed the worst features of congregationalism, without the benefits of their own system. Ministerial discipline was out of the question, and likewise ministerial independence. The Commissary could do nothing. He was the deputy of a bishop, without the right to ordain or depose a minister. So long as the parson was not installed—and the vestry had the sole right of presentation—he was subject from year to year to be removed. The complaint was that "the ministers were 'most miserably handled by their plebeian jundos, the vestries.' The 'hiring' of parsons, as it was called, was left wholly to them. In many instances they resolved either to have no ministers at all or to reduce them to their own terms. They used them as they pleased, paid them what they pleased, and discarded them when they pleased."

The results of Whitefield's labors were appropriated and assimilated in New England and New Jersey and Pennsylvania, for there was vitality in the Congregational and Presbyterian organizations. But the effete Establishment of Virginia got little profit from the visitation: it was too busily engaged at keeping down Dissenters. What they did not gather of the great evangelist's labors fared like seed sown on the way-side.

Fredericksburg, Virginia, did not treat him well on this or a subsequent tour. Jesse Lee—of whom more hereafter—passed through Fredericksburg, about the beginning of this century:

On the 24th of March, Mr. Lee preached in this place, and was rejoiced to find the Church enjoying a season of refreshing. It was the first spiritual visitation for a long series of years; and it is mentioned in connection with the following facts: When Mr. Whitefield passed through the place, on one occasion, he attempted to preach; and either while preaching or in seeking an opportunity to do

so, he was treated with so much rudeness and incivility that, in obedience to the words of Christ, he pulled off his shoes, and shook the dust from them, as a testimony against the place. And from that solemn form of denunciation until the time of which we are writing, it is not known that a sinner was converted; and it is affirmed no revival of religion had ever blessed the place with its manifold spiritual benefits. "If," says the author, "this legend be true, the curse had worked out its consummation. The indignation was past; and God had turned from the fierceness of his anger, and now had mercy upon the people. A goodly number were gathered into the fold of Christ, a house of worship was erected, and seed was sown that is even now bringing forth fruit unto eternal life.\*

At New Berne, N. C., "his preaching was attended with uncommon influence." As he approached Charleston, "he could scarcely believe but he was amongst Londoners, both in respect of gayety of dress and politeness of manners." He arrived at Savannah January 11th. It was a melancholy thing to see the colony of Georgia reduced even to a much lower ebb than when he left it, and almost deserted by all but such as could not well go away. Employing these, therefore, he thought would be of singular service, and the money expended might be also a means of keeping them in the colony. Before his arrival, Mr. Habersham had pitched upon a plot of ground of five hundred acres for the Orphan-house, about ten miles from Savannah, and had already begun to clear and stock it. The orphans, in the meantime, were accommodated in a hired house. On the 25th of March, 1740, he laid the first brick of the house, which he called "Bethesda," *i. e.*, a house of mercy. By this time near forty children were taken in, to be provided with food and raiment; and counting the workmen and all, he had near a hundred to be daily fed. He had very little money in bank, and yet he was persuaded that the best thing he could do at present for the infant colony was to carry on the work.

Here we look around for an old friend; for when we parted with Peter Böhler he was on his way to Savannah, to preach to the Brethren and to the negroes, and—as he might be able—to the Indians. He had a very long and perilous voyage, and on his arrival in Georgia found every thing in tumult, resulting from war between England and Spain. Many of the Moravian colonists, whose fears of personal safety were not groundless, had fled to Pennsylvania; and Böhler found a mere handful of Brethren and few slaves. During the summer he was prostrated

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\* Life and Times of Rev. Jesse Lee, by L. M. Lee, D.D.

by fever, and barely recovered in time to bury the beloved Schullius Richter, his companion and first-born in the gospel. Böhler and Seiffart, with sad hearts, led the remnant of their flock, on foot, through the wilderness to Wyoming Valley, and there established the famous Moravian settlement. Under the shadow of a broad oak, on the bark of which the initials of Böhler and Seiffart were visible so late as 1799, they returned thanks, in the fine hymns of their native land, to the God of all grace for his care.\* Böhler adapted himself to his new position with his usual tact. He superintended the carpenters and wielded the ax; he handled the saw with hearty good-will; he encouraged the workmen by his counsels and example, and conducted their daily services with great unction and power. He walked also to a distant mill to procure the necessities of life, preached with his accustomed fervor on the Sabbath, and performed all the duties of a Christian pastor with rare fidelity. The spiritual life of the community was thus sustained; and Böhler refers to the period as a season peculiarly blessed of the Lord. He was consecrated bishop at Herrnhag, in 1748; crossed the Atlantic six or eight times, serving his Church in both hemispheres—now in the universities and cities of the Old World, and now among the Indian tribes and infant settlements of the New. In 1775 he died, or entered into “the metropolis of souls,” as heaven is aptly termed in Moravian phraseology.†

Whitefield, to escape the summer heat, and to raise funds for the enterprise in hand, returned northward, preaching the gospel and, Paul-like, taking a collection. The first collection he made in America was in Charleston. He was desired by some of the inhabitants to speak in behalf of the poor orphans, and the collection amounted to £70. This was no small encouragement at that time, especially as he had reason to think it came from those who had received spiritual benefit by his ministrations. At Philadelphia he preached in the fields, and large collections were made for the Orphan-house—once, £110. Societies for praying and singing were increased, and many were concerned about their salvation. “Many negroes came,” says Whitefield, “some inquiring, Have I a soul?” He had the subtle power of interest-

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\* Life of Peter Böhler, by Lockwood.

† A worthy descendant of this excellent man—a Miss Böhler—until lately resided at Bethlehem, Pa., being connected with the Moravian Female Seminary.

ing all classes of hearers, and of chaining to his lips every ear within sound of his voice. A ship-builder was asked what he thought of him. "Think!" he replied; "I tell you, sir, every Sunday that I go to my parish church I can build a ship from stem to stern under the sermon; but were it to save my soul, under Mr. Whitefield, I could not lay a single plank." But perhaps the greatest proof of his persuasive powers was when he drew from Franklin's pocket the money which the author of "Poor Richard" had determined not to give. "I did not," says the philosopher, "approve of the Orphan-house at Savannah. Georgia was destitute of materials and workmen, and it was proposed to send them from Philadelphia, at a great expense. I thought it would have been better to have built the house at Philadelphia, and brought the children to it. This I advised, but he was resolute in his first project, rejected my counsel, and I therefore refused to contribute. I happened, soon after, to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper; another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably that I emptied my pocket into the collector's dish, gold and all. At this sermon," continues Franklin, "there was also one of our club who, being of my sentiments respecting the building in Georgia, and suspecting a collection might be intended, had by precaution emptied his pockets before he came from home. Toward the conclusion of the discourse, however, he felt a strong inclination to give, and applied to a neighbor who stood near him to lend him some money for the purpose. The request was fortunately made to perhaps the only man in the company who had the firmness not to be affected by the preacher. His answer was: 'At any other time, friend Hopkinson, I would lend thee freely, but not now, for thee seems to me to be out of thy right senses.'"

About this time Whitefield sent his confidential friend and agent, Seward, over to England on important business:

To acquaint the Trustees of Georgia with the state of the colony, and the means, under God, for the better establishment thereof, it being now upheld almost wholly

by the soldiery and Orphan-house, most of the people who are unconcerned in either being gone or about to go. The proper means are principally three: 1. An allowance of negroes. 2. A free title to the lands [under the Trustee-government females could not inherit]. 3. An independent magistracy, viz., such as are able and willing to serve without fee or reward. Further, to bring over the money lodged in their [Trustees] hands for building the church at Savannah.

He kept on preaching, generally twice a day, though sometimes so overpowered by heat that he had to be lifted to his horse, riding for the next appointment. With great joy he returned to the Orphan-house, bringing, in money and provisions, more than £500. His family was now increased to one hundred and fifty, and his friends, believing the work to be of God, continued to assist him. Though he was now very weak, the cry from various quarters for more preaching, and the necessity of supplying so large a family, made him go again to Charleston, where, as well as at many other towns, the people thronged. Charleston was the place of his greatest success, and of the greatest opposition. The Commissary thundered anathemas and wrote against him, but all in vain; helping friends still more increased. His gospel-ranging was itinerancy on a large scale. He reached New England, and great was the stir; he visited Jonathan Edwards, at Northampton. At every place on the road pulpits were open, and a divine unction attended his preaching. After leaving Northampton, he preached in many towns to large and affected congregations. The good old Governor of Massachusetts carried him in his coach from place to place, and could not help following him fifty miles out of town, saying, "Thanks be to God for such refreshings on our way to heaven!" The Boston people generally received him as an angel of God. "When he preached his farewell sermon in the Common, there were twenty-three thousand at a moderate computation." Dr. Samuel Hopkins, then a student, says in his *Memoirs*: "He preached against mixed dancing and the frolicking of males and females together; which practice was then very common in New England. This offended some, especially young people. But I remember I justified him in this in my own mind and in conversation with those who were disposed to condemn him. This was in 1740, when I entered on my last year in college." December 1, he set sail for Charleston, and makes the following remark:

It is now the seventy-fifth day since I arrived in Reedy Island. My body was then weak, but the Lord has much renewed its strength. I have been enabled to



preach, I think, a hundred and seventy-five times in public, besides exhorting frequently in private. I have traveled upward of eight hundred miles, and gotten upward of £700 in goods, provisions, and money, for the Georgia orphans. Never did I perform my journeys with so little fatigue, or see such a continuance of the Divine presence in the congregations to which I have preached. "Praise the Lord, O my soul!"

After preaching at Charleston and Savannah, he arrived at Bethesda in December, and in January left for England.\*

Hitherto the two Wesleys and Whitefield have worked together. Wesley once inquired, "Have we not leaned too much to Calvinism?" Whitefield no doubt felt that he had leaned too much to Arminianism. These tendencies must develop in all earnest and vigorous minds, until a consistent, not to say scientific, basis is reached. Each, therefore, became more pronounced. There is no half-way system. Now came what was equally painful to both parties, but inevitable—separation. Whitefield's New England associations and reading had advanced and intensified him, and he communicated his views to friends in Old England—not without effect. The latent Calvinism and the latent Arminianism in Methodism began to strive with each other like Rebecca's twins. After the birth they were brothers still, but must live and work apart.

The first intimation of an outbreak in the London Society was on this wise: A leading member, by name Acourt, had introduced his disputed tenets, till Charles Wesley gave orders that he should no longer be admitted. John was present when next he presented himself and demanded whether they refused admitting a person only because he differed from them in opinion. Wesley answered "No," but asked what opinions he meant. He replied: "That of election. I hold that a certain number are elected from eternity, and these must and shall be saved, and the rest of mankind must and shall be damned." And he affirmed that many of the Society held the same; upon which Wesley observed that he never asked whether they did or not; "only let them not trouble others by disputing about it." Acourt replied: "Nay, but I will dispute about it." "Why then," said Wesley, "would you come among us, who you know are of another mind?" "Because you are all wrong, and I am resolved to set you all right." "I fear," said Wesley, "your coming with this view would neither profit you nor us." "Then," replied Acourt, "I will go and

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\* *Memoirs of the Rev. Geo. Whitefield*, by Gillies.

tell all the world that you and your brother are false prophets. And I tell you in one fortnight you will all be in confusion."

John Cennick had been appointed by the Wesleys to teach the Kingswood School and, in their absence, to care for the Society at Bristol. He had developed his Calvinism and stolen away the hearts of half the people before they were aware of the mischief. "Alas!" wrote Charles to his brother, "alas! we have set the wolf to watch the sheep! God gave me great moderation toward him who for many months has been undermining our doctrine and authority." Cennick had written a letter to Whitefield, describing from his own point of view the shocking teachings of the two brothers on predestination, and concludes: "Fly, dear brother! I am alone—I am in the midst of the plague! If God give thee leave, make haste!" Of course Cennick was disconnected from the Society, and pretty soon there was a vacancy in the headship of the school; but he took a number with him.

To check the progress of what he regarded serious error, Wesley preached a sermon on "Free Grace"—text, Rom. viii. 32.\* The preacher begins by saying the grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is *free in all*, and *free for all*

First, it is free in all to whom it is given. It does not depend on any power or merit in man; no, not in any degree, neither in whole nor in part. It does not in any wise depend either on the good works or righteousness of the receiver; not on any thing he has done, or any thing he is. It does not depend on his good tempers, or good desires, for all these flow from the free grace of God; they are the streams only, not the fountain. They are the fruits of free grace, and not the root. They are not the cause, but the effects of it. Thus is his grace free in all; that is, no way depending on any power or merit in man, but on God alone, who freely gave us his own Son, and "with him freely giveth us all things." But is it free *for* all, as well as *in* all? To this some have answered: "No, it is free only for those whom God hath ordained to life; and they are but a little flock. The greater part of mankind God hath ordained to death; and it is not free for them. Them God hateth, and therefore, before they were born, decreed they should die eternally; because so was his good pleasure, his sovereign will. Accordingly, they are born for this: to be destroyed body and soul in hell; and they grow up under the irrevocable curse of God, without any possibility of redemption."

"But," one says, "this is not the predestination which I hold—I hold only the election of grace. What I believe is no more than this: that God, before the foundation of the world, did elect a certain number of men to be justified, sanctified, and glorified. Now, all these will be saved, and none else." You do

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\* Numbered CXXIV. in Series of Sermons: preached in Bristol, 1740.

not hold any decree of reprobation; you do not think God decrees any man to be damned; you only say: "God eternally decreed that all being dead in sin, he would say to some of the dry bones, Live, and to others he would not. That consequently these should be made alive, and those abide in death; these should glorify God by their salvation, and those by their destruction." Says the preacher:

If this is what you mean "by the election of grace," I would ask one or two questions: Are any who are not thus elected saved? Is it possible any man should be saved unless he be thus elected? If you say "No," you are but where you was—you still believe that in consequence of an unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, the greater part of mankind abide in death, without any possibility of redemption; inasmuch as none can save them but God, and he will not save them.

So, then, though you may use softer words than some, you mean the self-same thing. Call it therefore by whatever name you please, "election, preterition, predestination, or reprobation," it comes in the end to the same thing. The sense of all is plainly this: by virtue of an eternal, unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, one part of mankind are infallibly saved, and the rest infallibly damned; it being impossible that any of the former should be damned, or that any of the latter should be saved.

Wesley then proceeds to state the objections to such a doctrine: It renders all preaching vain; for preaching is needless to them that are elected; for they, whether with it or without it, will infallibly be saved. And it is useless for them that are not elected; for they, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly be damned. It takes away those first motives to follow after holiness, so frequently proposed in Scripture—the hope of future reward and fear of punishment, the hope of heaven and fear of hell. It destroys all motive to labor for the salvation of men, and all sense of responsibility for their spiritual and eternal welfare; for who can help or hinder against a fixed fate? It is full of blasphemy, he holds, since it represents our blessed Lord as a hypocrite, a man void of common sincerity:

For it cannot be denied that he everywhere speaks as if he was willing that all men should be saved. It cannot be denied that the gracious words which came out of his mouth are full of invitations to all sinners. To say, then, he did not intend to save all sinners, is to represent him as a gross deceiver. You cannot deny that he says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden." If, then, you say he calls those that cannot come; those whom he knows to be unable to come; those whom he can make able to come, but will not—how is it possible to describe greater insincerity? You represent him as mocking his helpless creatures by offering what he never intends to give. You describe him as saying one thing and meaning another. This doctrine represents the Most Holy God

as worse than the devil—as both more false and more unjust. More *false*, because the devil, liar as he is, hath never said he willeth all men to be saved; more *unjust*, because the devil cannot, if he would, be guilty of such injustice as you ascribe to God when you say that God condemned millions of souls to everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, for continuing in sin which, for want of that grace *He will not* give them, they cannot avoid.

Having shown the logical consequences of the doctrine in many directions, but at the same time not charging these practical consequences upon those whose lives disavow them—for many there be, says the preacher, who live better than their creed.—Wesley indulges in a startling apostrophe:

This is the blasphemy for which (however I love the persons who assert it) I abhor the doctrine of predestination—a doctrine upon the supposition of which, if one could possibly suppose it for a moment (call it "election," "reprobation," or what you please, for all comes to the same thing), one might say to our adversary the devil: "Thou fool, why dost thou roar about any longer? Thy lying in wait for souls is as needless and as useless as our preaching. Hearest thou not that God hath taken thy work out of thy hands; and that he doeth it much more effectually? Thou, with all thy principalities and powers, canst only so assault that we may resist thee; but he can irresistibly destroy both body and soul in hell! Thou canst only entice; but his unchangeable decree, to leave thousands of souls in death, compels them to continue in sin till they drop into everlasting burnings. Thou temptest; he forceth us to be damned, for we cannot resist his will. Thou fool, why goest thou about any longer, seeking whom thou mayest devour? Hearest thou not that God is the devouring lion, the destroyer of souls, the murderer of men?"

Wesley's sermon entitled "Free Grace" was printed as a 12mo pamphlet in twenty-four pages. Annexed to it was Charles Wesley's "Hymn on Universal Redemption," consisting of thirty-six stanzas, of which these two are specimens:

A power to choose, a will t' obey,  
 Freely his grace restores;  
 We all *may* find the living way,  
 And call the Saviour ours.

Thou canst not mock the sons of men,  
 Invite us to draw nigh,  
 Offer thy grace to all, and then—  
 Thy grace to most deny!

Copies of the sermon reached America, and Whitefield, with the assistance of New England friends, prepared a reply, which was published in Boston and in Charleston, and in London upon his arrival there. Wesley made only one objection to it. Whitefield not only tries to refute his teaching, but unnecessarily

makes a personal attack on Wesley's character, for which, the next year, he humbly begged his pardon.\* Wesley believed and preached general redemption, but raised no objection to Whitefield's believing and preaching election and final perseverance. His friends wished him to reply to Whitefield's pamphlet. He answered: "You may read Whitefield against Wesley, but you shall never read Wesley against Whitefield."

In a letter to his alienated friend, Wesley says: "These things ought not to be. It lay in your power to have prevented all, and yet to have borne testimony to what you call 'the truth.' If you had disliked my sermon, you might have printed another on the same text, and have answered my proofs, without mentioning my name; this had been fair and friendly."

Whitefield writes: "It would have melted any heart to have heard Mr. Charles Wesley and me weeping, after prayer, that if possible the breach might be prevented." Yet he could not help chiding "brother Charles" for aiding with his poetry that sermon in favor of the heresy of *universal redemption*. So soon did the powerful and persuasive verse of the poet of Methodism join with the logic of his brother in spreading the Bible truth that God, through the atonement of the Son and the influence of the Spirit, makes a *bona fide* offer of salvation to every one of the fallen race, and if any man is lost it must be by his own fault.

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast;  
Let every soul be Jesus' guest:  
Ye need not one be left behind,  
For God hath bidden all mankind.

Preventing grace is given every one who will use it, to enable him to accept and comply with the terms of salvation—repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Universal redemption, therefore, does not imply universal salvation. In their free agency men may refuse life. To Whitefield it seemed that the doctrine of universal redemption, as set forth by Wesley, "is really the highest reproach upon the dignity of the Son of God, and the merit of his blood." He could not understand how any could perish for whom Christ died, for "how," he asks, "can all be universally redeemed, if all are not finally saved."

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\* Whitefield alluded to Wesley's drawing a lot on a certain occasion, and in such terms as to give rise, by the exaggeration of his enemies, to the monstrous falsehood that Wesley had tossed up a shilling to determine the great question whether he should believe and preach and print Calvinism or Arminianism.

"Dear sir," he writes to Wesley, "for Jesus Christ's sake, consider how you dishonor God by denying election. You plainly make man's salvation depend not on God's *free grace*, but on man's *free will*. Dear, dear sir, give yourself to reading. Study the covenant of grace. Down with your carnal reasoning;" and then he prophesies Wesley "will print another sermon the reverse of this, and entitle it '*Free Grace Indeed*'—free, because not free to all; but free, because God may withhold it or give it to whom and when he pleases."

Howell Harris, that eminent lay preacher, who with Whitefield had awakened and evangelized Wales, and who was greatly esteemed and beloved by all Methodists, took up the question and wrote to Wesley, telling him that preaching electing love brings glory to God and benefit and consolation to the soul. He adds: "O when will the time come when we shall all agree? Till then, may the Lord enable us to bear with one another!"

Whitefield wrote from Bethesda to Wesley:

O that God may give you a sight of his free, sovereign, and electing love! But no more of this. Why will you compel me to write thus? Why will you dispute? I am willing to go with you to prison, and to death; but I am not willing to oppose you. Dear, dear sir, study the covenant of grace, that you may be consistent with yourself. Besides, dear sir, what a fond conceit is it to cry up perfection, and yet cry down the doctrine of final perseverance? But this and many other absurdities you will run into, because you will not own election; and you will not own election because you cannot own it without believing the doctrine of reprobation. What, then, is there in reprobation so horrid?

And yet later: "O that there may be harmony, and very intimate union between us! Yet, it cannot be, since you hold *universal redemption*. The devil rages in London. He begins now to triumph indeed. The children of God are disunited among themselves. My dear brother, for Christ's sake avoid all disputation. Do not oblige me to preach against you; I had rather die."

Again, from Charleston:

MY DEAR AND HONORED SIR: Give me leave, with all humility, to exhort you not to be strenuous in opposing the doctrines of election and final perseverance.

Perhaps the doctrines of election and of final perseverance have been abused; but, notwithstanding, they are children's bread, and ought not to be withheld from them, supposing they are always mentioned with proper cautions against the abuse of them. I write not this to enter into disputation. I cannot bear the thought of opposing you. Alas! I never read any thing that Calvin wrote. My doctrines I had from Christ and his apostles. I was taught them of God; and as God was pleased to send me out first, and to enlighten me first, so, I think, he still continues to do it.

They were both equally conscientious, if not equally logical. Whitefield wrote his "Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, in answer to his sermon entitled 'Free Grace,'" with the motto attached, "When Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

The "letter" is dated "Bethesda, in Georgia, December 24, 1740." He reiterates his reluctance to write against Wesley, protesting that Jonah could not go with more reluctance against Nineveh. "Were nature to speak," said he, "I had rather die than do it; and yet if I am faithful to God, and to my own and others' souls, I must not stand neuter any longer." On his return to England in March, 1741, Wesley called on him, and says of the interview: "He told me he and I preached two different gospels; and therefore he not only would not join with or give me the right-hand of fellowship, but was resolved to preach publicly against me and my brother, wheresoever he preached at all." This threat was carried into effect. Soon the Tabernacle was built, not far away from the Foundry, and there Whitefield, with Cennick, Howell Harris, and others, good men and holy, preached Calvinistic Methodism. David and Jonathan are divided. Wesley writes: "Those who believed universal redemption had no desire to separate; but those who held particular redemption would not hear of any accommodation, being determined to have no fellowship with men that were 'in such dangerous errors.' So there were now two sorts of Methodists—those for particular and those for general redemption." And this comforting philosophy he bases on the unwelcome fact:

The case is quite plain. There are ligots both for predestination and against it. God is sending a message to those on either side. But neither will receive it, unless from one who is of their own opinion. Therefore, for a time, you are suffered to be of one opinion, and I of another. But when his time is come, God will do what man cannot, namely, make us both of one mind.

Emissaries of Satan were not wanting to make the most of the breach. Wesley's journal gives an incident:

A private letter written to me by Mr. Whitefield having been printed without either his leave or mine, great numbers of copies were given to our people, both at the door and in the Foundry itself. Having procured one of them, I related (after preaching) the naked fact to the congregation, and told them: "I will do just what I believe Mr. Whitefield would were he here himself." Upon which I tore it in pieces before them all. Every one who had received it did the same. So that in two minutes there was not a copy left. Ah! poor Ahithophel! *Ibi omnis effusus labor!* (So all the labor's lost!)

The small men and the go-betweens were very bitter; tongues and pens were busy, and the prophets of evil saw Methodism coming speedily to naught. But the leaders loved and esteemed each other, and soon came to friendly interviews. Whitefield preached in the Foundry and Wesley in the Tabernacle, and, as the latter said, "another stumbling-block was taken out of the way." Good feeling was fully restored, and while each retained his opinions to the last, they agreed to disagree. When Whitefield died in America, and his will was opened in London, the last item in it was found to be: "N. B.—I also leave a mourning-ring to my honored and dear friends and disinterested fellow-laborers, the Revs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our difference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine."

And while the trustees of the Tabernacle were arranging for the funeral, his chief executor came forward and informed them that he had many times said to Whitefield: "If you should die abroad, whom shall we get to preach your funeral-sermon? Must it be your old friend, the Rev. John Wesley?" And his answer constantly was, "He is the man."

The chief agents of the Methodist Revival are parted for a season; each influencing a class not affected by the other. The living stream is divided: one branch, after refreshing and enriching a dry and thirsty land, is absorbed and lost; the other, with well-defined and widening banks and deepening current, **flows on.**



## CHAPTER XVI.

Christian Fellowship Provided for—Bands, Love-feasts, Class-meetings—Origin of these Means of Grace—The Work Extends—Epworth—Wesley Preaches on his Father's Tombstone; Buries his Mother—Newcastle—Cornwall—Discipline—First Annual Conference—The Organization Complete.

CHRISTIAN fellowship is a leading feature of Methodist economy. It was early provided for in the band-meeting and the love-feast, where mutual edification is the object, and personal experience the subject of discourse. The poet of Methodism was felicitous and fruitful in hymns for social worship. Of the proportionally large number on the "Communion of Saints" in Methodist hymn-books, Charles Wesley is the author of more than three-fourths. "The gift which He on one bestows" is thus participated in by all.

The love-feast was taken, with little modification, from the Moravians, who had it from the *agapæ* of the Primitive Church. Christians meet apart at stated times, and after eating the simplest meal together in token of good-will, light and love are promoted by conversation on the things of God, specially as related to personal experience. Bands also were introduced from the same quarter, and passed over into Methodism. This institute provided for a close fellowship. It required a subdivision into small and select numbers. The band-meetings were always voluntary, and never a test of Society-membership. "Two, three, or four true believers, who have full confidence in each other, form a band. Only it is to be observed that in one of these bands all must be men or all women, and all married or all single."\* The design is to obey that command of God by St. James: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed." In the rules laid down very searching inquiries were allowed to be made of each other by the members, and very free disclosures of the interior life, as to temptations and deliv-

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\* Rules of the Band Societies, drawn up for Methodist Societies, Dec. 25, 1738. The Band Rules were continued in the Methodist Discipline in America till the year 1854, when they were eliminated by the General Conference of the M. E. Church, South. The General Conference of the (Northern) M. E. Church canceled them in 1856.

erances. Much cavil has been indulged in, by ignorant friends and critical enemies, against the bands; but in vain has it been attempted to find in them either the principle or the evil of the Romish Confessional. Richard Watson thus replies to certain objectors within the pale of the Established Church in his time:

Whatever objection may be made to these meetings, as a formal part of discipline (though with us they are only recommended, not enjoined), the principle of them is to be found in this passage of Scripture. They have been compared to the auricular confession of the papists, but ignorantly enough, for the confession is in itself essentially different, and it is not made to a minister, but takes place among private Christians to each other, and is, in fact, nothing more than a general declaration of the religious experience of the week. Nor is the abuse of the passage in St. James to the purpose of superstition a reason sufficient for neglecting that friendly confession of faults by Christians to each other which may engage their prayers in each other's behalf. The founders of the national Church did not come to this sweeping conclusion, notwithstanding all their zeal against the confession of the Romish Church. In the Homily on Repentance it is said: "We ought to confess our weakness and infirmities one to another, to the end that, knowing each other's frailness, we may the more earnestly pray together unto Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, that he will vouchsafe to pardon us our infirmities, for his Son Jesus Christ's sake."

The class-meeting came later, and is a distinctive outgrowth of Methodism. This means of grace connected pastoral oversight with Christian fellowship; it came when it was needed, providentially. Wesley's itinerancy had begun. How could he watch over so many souls? In London, as early as 1741, there were over a thousand in the Society. The class-meeting is so important that Wesley's own account of it is here given:

But as much as we endeavored to watch over each other, we soon found some who did not live in the gospel. I do not know that any hypocrites were crept in, for indeed there was no temptation; but several grew cold, and gave way to the sins which had long easily beset them. We quickly perceived there were many ill consequences of suffering these to remain among us. It was dangerous to others, inasmuch as all sin is of an infectious nature. It brought such a scandal on their brethren as exposed them to what was not properly the reproach of Christ. It laid a stumbling-block in the way of others, and caused the truth to be evil spoken of. We groaned under these inconveniences long, before a remedy could be found. The people were scattered so wide in all parts of the town, from Wapping to Westminster, that I could not easily see what the behavior of each person in his own neighborhood was; so that several disorderly walkers did much hurt before I was apprised of it. At length, while we were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon a method for which we have cause to bless God ever since. I was talking with several of the Society in Bristol (Feb. 15th, 1742) concerning the means of paying the debts there, when one stood up and said: Let

every member of the Society give a penny a week, till all are paid." Another answered: "But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it." "Then," said he, "put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself; and each of you call on eleven of your neighbors weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." It was done. In awhile some of these informed me they found such and such a one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, "This is the thing, the very thing we have wanted so long." I called together all the leaders of the classes (so we used to term them and their companies), and desired that each would make a particular inquiry into the behavior of those whom he saw weekly. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected. Some turned from the evil of their ways, and some were put away from us.

As this took up a great deal of the leader's time, and he had seldom a suitable place to converse with the members personally, it was soon resolved that the class meet in one place at a given time, beginning and closing with song and prayer. This practice became general, and gave efficiency and organization to the Wesleyan Societies. The leaders then met Wesley or his assistant at another time every week to report any cases of sickness or disorderly conduct, and to pay the steward of the Society the sum which had been received of the class.

Thus class-meetings began. Wesley writes: "It can scarce be conceived what advantages have been reaped by this little prudential regulation. Many now experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to bear one another's burdens, and naturally to care for each other's welfare. And as they had daily a more intimate acquaintance, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. Upon reflection, I could not but observe, This is the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity." The class-meeting was thus endowed with a pastoral, financial, and devotional function. Long after "a penny a week and a shilling a quarter" fell into disuse by the adoption of larger financial schemes among wealthier people, the inquiry how their souls prospered, and giving suitable advice in every case, remained the chief business of the class-leader. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." Jesus is entitled to the praise, and every member to the benefit, of a work of grace in any soul. The class-meeting not only strengthened the weak, it confirmed the strong, and trained and developed laborers for wider fields. At the first, Societies were of a general character; but at the opening of the Foundry, the distinct Methodist United Society (1739)

was instituted; and this form of organization spread to Bristol and elsewhere. The class-meeting began in Bristol (1742); and this closer organization soon obtained among the Societies at London and elsewhere. All organizations must have rules, and the Rules of the United Societies were framed and published at Newcastle (1743), and governed all. By and by society and class became synonymous terms, where one class included all the Society at a place. Some of the old members were at first averse to this new arrangement, regarding it not as a privilege but rather as a restraint. They objected that there were no such meetings when they joined the Society, and asked why they should be instituted now. Wesley answered that he regarded class-meetings not essential, nor of Divine institution, but merely prudential helps, which it was a pity the Society had not been favored with from the beginning. "We are always open to instruction," he said to these complainants, "willing to be wiser every day than we were before, and to change whatever we can change for the better."

The class-meeting has been the germ of thousands of Methodist churches. When, under the word, souls have been awakened in any place, or when, by immigration, a few Christians are thrown together, a class is formed. The pastor appoints the leader, who is in the pastor's stead during his absence. The organization is simple and effective, at once bringing into play all necessary machinery. Weekly meetings and the fellowship that is involved are most helpful to those, in any state of knowledge or grace, who are trying to work out their salvation. The apostolic injunction of "assembling ourselves together" is fulfilled. Prayer-meetings and preaching and the sacraments follow, and the work expands indefinitely.

"Form Societies in every place where we preach," was Wesley's motto. Where this had not been done, his remark was: "All the seed has fallen by the way-side; there is scarce any fruit remaining." The first Societies passed readily into these classes, and thus was formed the primary and compact organism.

About this time Whitefield wrote to Wesley: "My attachment to America will not permit me to abide very long in England; consequently, I should but weave a Penelope's web if I formed Societies; and if I should form them, I have not proper assistants to take care of them. I intend therefore to go about preach-

ing the gospel to every creature. You, I suppose, are for settling Societies everywhere.” Dr. Adam Clarke says:

It was by this means (the formation of Societies) that we have been enabled to establish permanent and holy churches over the world. Mr. Wesley saw the necessity of this from the beginning. Mr. Whitefield, when he separated from Mr. Wesley, did not follow it. What was the consequence? The fruit of Mr. Whitefield’s labors died with himself; Mr. Wesley’s fruit remains, grows, increases, and multiplies exceedingly. Did Mr. Whitefield see his error? He did, but not till it was too late. His people, long unused to it, would not come under this discipline. Have I authority to say so? I have, and you shall have it. Forty years ago I traveled in Bradford, the Wilts Circuit, with Mr. John Pool. Himself told me the following anecdote: Mr. Pool was well known to Mr. Whitefield, and having met him one day, Whitefield accosted him in the following manner: “Well, John, art thou still a Wesleyan?” Pool replied: “Yes, sir; and I thank God that I have the privilege of being in connection with him, and one of his preachers.” “John,” said Whitefield, “thou art in thy right place. My Brother Wesley acted wisely—the souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand.”

The watch-night dates back to 1740. The Kingswood colliers had been used to “watch the old year out” with riot and revelries, and now that a reformation had taken place in them, this their custom was reformed also. It was suggested by James Rogers, a collier noted among his neighbors for playing on the violin, but who, being awakened under the ministry of Charles Wesley, went home, burned his fiddle, and told his wife that he meant to be a Methodist. He became a faithful lay preacher. The people met at half-past eight; the house was filled from end to end; and “we concluded the year,” says Wesley, “wrestling with God in prayer, and praising him for the wonderful work which he had already wrought upon the earth.” The meeting soon became a favorite one, and was held monthly. Wesley writes: “Some advised me to put an end to this; but upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it; rather, I believed it might be made of more general use. The Church, in ancient times, was accustomed to spend whole nights in prayer, which nights were termed *vigiliæ*, or vigils.” Always watchful to promote the spiritual prosperity of his people, Wesley at a later day introduced into his Societies the practice of renewing the covenant on the first Sunday of every year. In many places the renewal of the covenant closes the watch-night service.

During the next two years Wesley traversed many parts of the kingdom, preaching almost daily, and sometimes four sermons on the Sabbath. Helpers were raised up, and with this assistance he was able to maintain regular worship in connection with his various Societies, and at the same time to extend the work into new districts. While he was passing and repassing between London and Bristol, with continual deviations to Southampton, Leicester, Nottingham, Bath, and Wales, Charles Wesley was scarcely less active. It required the utmost efforts of the brothers to guard their people against Moravian stillness and Antinomianism on the one hand, and Whitefield's doctrine of predestination on the other. By 1742 Wesley had not only formed numerous Societies, but saw more fruit of his labors rising up around him as able assistants. Twenty-three preachers were, during this year, regularly engaged as helpers, besides many local preachers. Ingham and the Delamottes, meantime, had been won over to "Moravian mysticism;" and it required all, and more than all, John Nelson could do in Yorkshire to keep the "German boar of stillness" from laying waste the vineyard in those parts.

In May Wesley invaded the north. The power of the gospel as exhibited at Kingswood was equal to the wants of Newcastle. The opening of his mission at this point, where one of his strongest churches was planted and an important center of operations established, deserves notice. The account exhibits all the elements of the successful evangelist. His journal (1742) says:

We came to Newcastle-upon-Tyne about six, and, after a short refreshment, walked into the town. I was surprised; so much drunkenness, cursing, and swearing (even from the mouths of little children) do I never remember to have seen and heard before, in so small a compass of time. Surely this place is ripe for Him who "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." At seven next [Sunday] morning I walked down to Sandgate, the poorest and most contemptible part of the town, and, standing at the end of the street with John Taylor, began to sing the hundredth Psalm. Three or four people came out to see what was the matter, who soon increased to four or five hundred. I suppose there might be twelve or fifteen hundred, before I had done preaching; to whom I applied those solemn words: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Observing the people, when I had done, to stand gaping and staring upon me, with the most profound astonishment, I told them: "If you desire to know who I am, my name is John Wesley. At five in the evening, with God's help, I design to preach here again." At five, the hill on which I designed to preach was covered from the top to the bottom. I never saw so large a number of people together either in Moorfields or at Kennington Common.

On his way southward the next month, Wesley passed through Epworth—his first visit for many years. Beginning on Sunday, he spent a few days in the neighborhood, preaching daily with uncommon tenderness and power. We quote from his journal:

A little before the service began [Sunday] I went to Mr. Romley, the curate, and offered to assist him either by preaching or reading prayers. But he did not care to accept of my assistance. The church was exceeding full in the afternoon, a rumor being spread that I was to preach. After sermon John Taylor stood in the church-yard, and gave notice, as the people were coming out: "Mr. Wesley, not being permitted to preach in the church, designs to preach here at six o'clock." Accordingly at six I came, and found such a congregation as I believe Epworth never saw before. I stood near the east end of the church, upon my father's tombstone, and cried: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

He returned to the same pulpit on Friday, and during the sermon "lamentation and great mourning were heard; God bowing the hearts of the people, so that on every side, as with one accord, they lifted up their voice and wept aloud."

Wesley tells of the next day: "I preached on the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith. While I was speaking, several dropped down as dead; and among the rest, such a cry was heard, of sinners groaning for the righteousness of faith, as almost drowned my voice. But many of these soon lifted up their heads with joy, and broke out into thanksgiving; being assured they now had the desire of their soul—the forgiveness of their sins. I observed a gentleman there who was remarkable for not pretending to be of any religion at all. I was informed he had not been at public worship of any kind for upward of thirty years. Seeing him stand as motionless as a statue, I asked him abruptly, 'Sir, are you a sinner?' He replied, with a deep and broken voice, 'Sinner enough;' and continued staring upward till his wife and a servant or two, who were all in tears, put him into his chaise and carried him home."

And he wound up the protracted meeting on Sunday evening: "At six I preached for the last time in Epworth church-yard (being to leave the town the next morning), to a vast multitude gathered together from all parts, on the beginning of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. I continued among them for near three hours; and yet we scarce knew how to part. I am well assured," writes Wesley, "that I did far more good to my Lincolnshire

parishioners by preaching three days on my father's tomb than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit."

All this was good news for his mother, then at his house and awaiting her "release," which occurred the following month. Standing by her open grave (in Bunhill Fields, opposite City Road Chapel), he preached her funeral-sermon from the text: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." He says: "Almost an innumerable company of people being gathered together, about five in the afternoon, I committed to the earth the body of my mother, to sleep with her fathers. It was one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see on this side eternity."

Fierce persecutions occur about this time. The clergy stir up the people from their pulpits, and the houses of Methodists are mobbed, and their chapels torn down. Wesley, attending a church-service one Sunday in Staffordshire, makes this report:

On Sunday the scene began to open; I think I never heard so wicked a sermon, and delivered with such bitterness of voice and manner, as that which Mr. E——n preached in the afternoon. I knew what effect this must have in a little time; and therefore judged it expedient to prepare the poor people for what was to follow, that when it came they might not be offended. Accordingly, I strongly enforced these words of our Lord: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

In a few days the Wednesbury mob took Wesley out of the house he was preaching in, carried him round and about for several hours with many threats of violence, but were strangely withheld, and returned him, at ten o'clock at night, to the place they took him from, as he says with no worse damage than a bruised hand and the loss of "one flap of his waistcoat." His brother met him soon after. "He looked," said Charles, "like a soldier of Christ; his clothes were torn to tatters;" a proof that Wesley's account of the loss of one flap of his waistcoat is a modest statement. Their temper of mind is exhibited in a hymn written by Charles Wesley after one of these tumults:

Worship, and thanks, and blessing,  
And strength ascribe to Jesus!  
Jesus alone defends his own,  
When earth and hell oppress us.



The hymn for opening an Annual Conference, composed afterward by Charles Wesley for that purpose, and sung on the first day wherever Conferences of itinerant preachers are held, shows the circumstances in which it had its origin and inspiration:

And are we yet alive,  
And see each other's face?  
Glory and praise to Jesus give  
For his redeeming grace!

What troubles have we seen,  
What conflicts have we passed,  
Fightings without, and fears within,  
Since we assembled last!

Charles visited Cornwall, the chapel at St. Ives at that time being the head-quarters of Methodism in the west. Here, as in Wednesbury, he found the clergy using their utmost efforts to stir up the people against the new sect. The consequence was a series of disgraceful riots, dangerous to the lives of the Methodists and their ministers, and destructive of their property. During those seasons of violence the "preaching-house" at St. Ives was gutted and the benches and furniture destroyed, the preacher and congregation being savagely assaulted. The church-warden at Pool, heading a mob, drove the preacher and congregation to the border of the parish; then, leaving them there, he returned and rewarded his followers with drink in the ale-house at Pool, in consequence of which the following entry may now be found in the parish book: "Expenses at Ann Gartrell's on driving the Methodists, nine shillings." \*

How the Methodists moved on a place, when they meant to take it, is illustrated by the manner in which Cornwall was subdued to Christ. Charles Wesley remained preaching in every part of the mining region with great success, notwithstanding furious persecution, until the first week in August (1743), when he returned to London. In less than a month his brother arrived at St. Ives. On this occasion John Nelson accompanied Wesley; his journal, therefore, affords information. Nelson set out from London for this journey in company with another preacher; they had but one horse between the two, and came through Oxford, and preached in the towns by the way. After preaching at Bristol and Bath, Nelson and Downes proceeded toward Cornwall with Wesley,

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\* History of Wesleyan Methodism, by Geo. Smith, F. A.S.

who was accompanied by Mr. Shepherd, who had been preaching in that quarter. They appear to have had a horse each; for Nelson says, "We generally set out before Mr. Wesley and Mr. Shepherd." Having reached St. Ives, Wesley's first care here, as in other places, was to make a thorough examination of the classes. He found about one hundred and twenty members; and near a hundred of these enjoyed peace with God.

So soon as they were fairly at their journey's end, John Nelson went to work at his trade as a mason; and not long after, Downes, being taken ill of fever, was for a time laid aside. Wesley and Shepherd immediately began to preach, and were joined in these labors by Nelson in the evenings. These laborers in a short time spread the gospel most abundantly over the narrow peninsula of West Cornwall.

What they endured in the prosecution of their mission may be seen from Nelson's journal. As soon as he had finished his job of work, he also fully devoted himself to preaching; and of this period he says: "All this time Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor; he had my greatcoat for his pillow, and I had Burkitt's 'Notes on the New Testament' for mine. After being here near three weeks, one morning about three o'clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, and, finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying: 'Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer; I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but on one side.'" Nelson continues: "We usually preached on the commons, going from one common to another, and it was but seldom any one asked us to eat or drink. One day we had been at St. Hilary Downs, and Mr. Wesley had preached from Ezekiel's vision of dry bones, and there was a shaking among the people as he preached. As we returned, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying: 'Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst that ever I saw for getting food. Do the people think we can live by preaching?'" Wesley says that the last morning of his stay he was waked between three and four by a company of miners, who, fearing they should be too late for the five o'clock preaching, had gathered around the house, and were singing hymns.

Fidelity and closeness of pastoral oversight was a feature of Wesleyan polity, as appears by very many journalized visitations.

Take these from the latter end of 1743.—At Bristol, Wesley prosecuted a careful inquiry into the state of the Society by speaking with every member individually, and rejoiced to find them neither “barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “On the following days,” he says, “I spoke with each member of the Society in Kingswood. I cannot understand how any minister can hope ever to give up his account with joy, unless (as Ignatius advises) he ‘knows all his flock by name, not overlooking the men-servants and maid-servants.’” About the end of the month he went to London, where, assisted by his brother, he made a similar visitation of the London Society; at the close of it he preached a sermon, and made a collection of £50 toward the expense of building the chapel at Newcastle. In 1745 he carefully examined the Society in London one by one, and wrote a list of the whole with his own hand, numbered from one to two thousand and eight. In 1746 he repeated this operation, and wrote another list, in which the number was reduced to one thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine.

Northward he moves early in 1744. Arrived in Newcastle, between three and four hundred miles from Bristol, after preaching in the town and in adjacent places, he read the rules to the Society, and commenced a careful examination of the roll. He was particular in this inquiry because of the great revival which had taken place a few months before. The result was that seventy-six had left the Society, and sixty-four were expelled. Coming to particulars concerning those expelled, we get an insight into the moral code, as well as discipline of those days. His journal tells us: “Two for cursing and swearing; two for habitual Sabbath-breaking; seventeen for drunkenness; two for retailing spirituous liquors; three for quarreling and brawling; three for habitual, willful lying; four for railing and evil-speaking,” etc.

What of those withdrawn? Wesley accounts for them, too, in his journal:

I observed the number of those who had left the Society, since December, was seventy-six; fourteen of these (chiefly Dissenters) said they left it because otherwise their ministers would not give them the sacrament; nine more, because their husbands or wives were not willing they should stay in it; twelve, because their parents were not willing; five, because their master and mistress would not let them come; seven, because their acquaintance persuaded them to leave it; five, because people said such bad things of the Society; nine, because they would not

be laughed at; three, because they would not lose the poor's allowance; three more, because they could not spare time to come; two, because it was too far off; one, because she was afraid of falling into fits; one, because people were so rude in the street; two, because Thomas N—— was in the Society; one, because he would not turn his back on his baptism; one, because we were mere Church of England men; and one, because it was time enough to serve God yet.

On his return to London he raised £60, to alleviate the sufferings of the persecuted Methodists in Staffordshire, whose houses could be known, as one rode along the street, by the broken doors and windows, and by other signs of violence. He visited Cornwall later in the spring. At St. Ives the preaching-house was demolished. The people had been excited to such frenzy against the Methodists that on hearing that the British Admiral Matthews had beat the Spaniards, they manifested their joy by tearing down the Methodist chapel. But at last the cause triumphed gloriously in Cornwall.

It is time for another forward step—the first Annual Conference. Wesley had been pursuing his itinerant course about five years. He had in connection with him as fellow-laborers forty-five preachers, including half a dozen ministers of the Establishment who coöperated with him. This number is exclusive of the local preachers throughout the country, of whom there was a considerable number. Societies had been formed in many of the principal towns from Land's End to Newcastle. The number of members is not known. There were nearly three thousand in London, and the aggregate number throughout the country must have been several thousand. The first Conference was a meeting of his “helpers,” or lay assistants, and the pious clergymen who had sympathized with them. He requested the attendance of these persons, and has left on record his object for doing so:

In 1744 I wrote to several clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the gospel, desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God.

This original Conference was held at the Foundry, and began June 25th. There were present John Wesley, Charles Wesley; John Hodges, rector of Wenvo; Henry Piers, vicar of Bexley; Samuel Taylor, vicar of Quinton; and John Meriton, a clergyman from the Isle of Man. Thomas Richards, Thomas Maxfield, John Bennett, and John Downes were the helpers, or lay preachers, present.

On the day before the Conference commenced, besides the ordinary preaching services, a love-feast was held; and during the day the Lord's Supper was administered to the whole London Society, now numbering between two and three thousand members. The sessions were held by adjournment from Monday, June 25th, till the end of the week. Great precaution was taken by Wesley in enacting suitable rules for the discussions of the Conference. It was decided "to check no one, either by word or look, even though he should say what is quite wrong; to beware of making haste, or of showing or indulging any impatience, whether of delay or contradiction;" that "every question proposed be fully debated, and 'bolted to the bran.'"

Preliminaries having been arranged, and earnest prayer offered, the design of the meeting was proposed under three heads, namely: To "consider, 1. What to teach. 2. How to teach. 3. What to do; that is, how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice." Under the first head, a conversation was continued throughout this and the following day, which embraced the leading doctrines of the gospel, such as justification, saving faith, imputed righteousness, sanctification, etc.:

We began by considering the doctrine of justification; the questions relating to which, with the substance of the answers given thereto, were as follows: Q. What is it to be justified? A. To be pardoned, and received into God's favor, into such a state that if we continue therein we shall be finally saved. Q. Is faith the condition of justification? A. Yes; for every one who believeth not is condemned, and every one who believes is justified. Q. But must not repentance, and works meet for repentance, go before this faith? A. Without doubt, if by repentance you mean conviction of sin, and by works meet for repentance, obeying God as far as we can, forgiving our brother, leaving off evil, doing good, and using his ordinances according to the power we have received. Q. What is faith? A. First, a sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost—"Christ loved me, and gave himself for me." This is that faith by which he is justified, or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the same Spirit bears witness, "Thou art pardoned, thou hast redemption in his blood." And this is saving faith, whereby the love of God is shed abroad in his heart. Q. What sins are consistent with justifying faith? A. No *willful* sin. If a believer *willfully* sins, he casts away his faith. Neither is it possible he should have *justifying faith again* without previously *repenting*. Q. Must every believer come into a state of doubt, or fear, or darkness? A. It is certain a believer *need* never again come into condemnation. It seems he need not come into a state of doubt, or fear, or darkness; and that (ordinarily, at least) he *will not*, unless by ignorance or unfaithfulness. Yet it is true that the first joy does seldom last long; that it is commonly followed by doubts and fears; and that God frequently permits great heaviness before any large manifestation of himself. Q. Are works necessary to the continuance of faith? A. Without doubt; for a man

may forfeit the free gift of God, either by sins of omission or commission. Q. Can faith be lost but for the want of works? A. It cannot but through disobedience. Q. How is faith made *perfect by works*? A. The more we exert our faith, the more it is increased. To him that hath shall be given.

Then they took up discipline. The General Rules\* were read, and by the time adjournment was reached they not only understood each other, but were of one mind and heart. The spirit and substance of the compact made between the founder of Methodism and his preachers are contained in the Rule of Enlistment into the heroic order of itinerants, adopted at this first Conference:

Act in all things not according to your own will, but *as a son in the gospel*. As such it is your part to employ your time in that manner that we direct; partly in visiting the flock from house to house (the sick in particular); partly in such a course of reading, meditation, and prayer as we advise from time to time. Above all, if you labor with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work which we direct at those times and places which we judge most for his glory.†

The proceedings indicate that Methodism began not in a theoretical but in an experimental faith; and this was made the basis of the plan of operations. Religion itself was the inspiring spirit of order. The inward and divine life created the external economy, and not the economy the life. Experimental piety was the first in order, and discipline the second. Five days thus spent must have had a happy effect on the minds of such men. Wesley said of them: "They desire nothing but to save their own souls, and those that hear them."

The next Conference met at Bristol, with fewer "clergy" and more "preachers." "We had our second Conference," says Wesley, "with as many of the brethren who labor in the word as could be present." On this occasion the theological doctrines mooted at the first Conference were carefully reviewed; the opinions then given, and the forms of expression in which they were conveyed, were now very carefully scrutinized, and in some cases modified. The fidelity of the preachers also, in respect of the

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\* "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies, in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Price one penny." 12 pages. This, the first edition of the "Rules," is signed by John Wesley only, and bears date of February 23, 1743. A second edition was issued, signed by both John and Charles Wesley, dated May 1, 1743. (Tyerman.)

† This has been called *sacramentum itinerarium*, and is the same now as then.

rules that had been laid down, was considered, and suitable admonitions were administered. In regard to the suggestion that the Methodists might ultimately become a distinct sect, when their clerical leaders were no more, these servants of God declare: "We cannot with a safe conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly or probably happen after we are dead;" assuming that the salvation of souls is of greater importance than the maintenance of any system of ecclesiastical order whatever.

At the third Conference (1746) the call and the qualification to preach were carefully considered and defined; and this important item of Methodist economy was then determined as we now have it, in answer to the question, "How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost and called of God to preach?" At this Conference, also, the circuits were mapped out and first published—seven in number.

From the germ-cell of the class-meeting up to the Annual Conference, the ecclesiastical economy has been evolved, and the organic structure is complete. The first provides for the reception and supervision of members, the last for the reception and supervision of ministers.

At an early day the question was asked: "Can there be any such thing as a general union of our Societies throughout England?" It was proposed to regard the Society in London as the mother Church; and for every assistant in country circuits to inquire particularly into the state of his circuit, and send such information to the stewards of the London Circuit, who would settle a regular correspondence with all the Societies. It was also proposed that a yearly collection be established, out of which any pressing Society debts might be discharged, and any Society suffering persecution, or in real distress, might be relieved. The necessity and utility of bringing into vigorous operation the connectional principle appears to have been suggested to the mind of Wesley; and contemplating its effects, he exultingly says: "Being thus united in one body, of which Christ Jesus is the Head, neither the world nor the devil will be able to separate us in time or in eternity." In the Annual Conference this bond of union was found. To it reports were made, from it rules and regulations emanated. Not only the *esprit de corps* of the preach-

ers was fostered, but their orthodoxy and pastoral fidelity were looked after. No doctrinal test was required for membership. If one desired "to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from his sins," he met the condition for entrance, and by keeping certain rules he met the condition of continuance; and it may be safely asserted that no awakened soul following those rules will fail of coming to gospel light and liberty. The members might be Arminian or Calvinistic, they might favor Dissent or affect the Establishment—no question on those points was raised in the class-meeting or love-feast; the one thing was to help sinners to conversion and Christians to holiness. It was very different, however, in the case of preachers—they were held closely to a doctrinal as well as an experimental standard. In the beginning of Methodism, the evil of dissentient if not heretical teachers was seen—clashing, and confusion, and contradiction. Therefore, one of the most important functions of the Annual Conference is to see that the trumpet gives no uncertain sound. It began by inquiring what to teach, and it inquires, year after year, if the doctrine accepted is taught. Hence, such items as these occur in the early Minutes: "Q. Can we unite, if it be desirable, with Mr. Ingham? A. We may now behave to him with all tenderness and love, and unite with him when he returns to the old Methodist doctrine. Q. Predestinarian preachers have done much harm among us; how may this be prevented for the future? A. Let none of them preach any more in our Societies. Q. Do any among us preach Antinomianism? A. We trust not." Whereupon a wholesome tract upon that subject was read and duly commented on in open Conference.

By and by we see the Conference providing for the support of preachers and their families, for the superannuated, for education, for missions, for book and tract distribution, and, in a word, guiding affairs with united wisdom. This final development of Methodist economy—destined to be repeated throughout all lands, and to be the most potent of assemblies—having been reached, henceforth we are to witness only such changes as growth makes in the spiritual body.



## CHAPTER XVII.

Methodism in Ireland—Friendly Clergy—Hymn-making—Marriage of Charles Wesley—Education—Kingswood School—Theological and Biblical: Using the Press—Making and Selling Books—Marriage of John Wesley.

A NEW field was entered about 1747. Ireland was then eminently a land of popery. Hearing that a Methodist Society had been formed in Dublin, John Wesley crossed the Irish Channel, and spent a few weeks in that city, preaching, examining the classes, and strengthening the Society. On his return Charles took his place in Ireland, and spent six months there, preaching with great power in many places. He was surprised at the kindness of his reception, at the absence of persecution. But so soon as the word began to take effect, so soon as the great door and effectual was open, the adversaries appeared. Nor was there any lack of them afterward. Instead of rotten eggs at long range, clubs were used, and many a scar and deep wound was received. This entry occurs in his journal in October: "I opened our new house at Dolphin's-barn, by preaching to a great multitude within and without. After preaching five times to-day, I was as fresh as in the morning." Something more civil than popish shillalahs occurred at Cork—a presentment by the grand jury: "We find and present," say they, "Charles Wesley to be a person of ill fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of His Majesty's peace, and we pray he may be transported." They made the same presentment with respect to seven other Methodist preachers, most of whose names they misspelled. Well might John Wesley pronounce this "memorable presentment" "worthy to be preserved in the annals of Ireland for all succeeding generations." Charles was in London when these enlightened Hibernians gave judgment concerning his character and declared him worthy of a felon's doom. He wrote a hymn of triumph on the occasion.

John Wesley often visited Ireland, to the end of his life. Forty-two times he crossed the Irish Channel, and spent, in his different visits, at least half a dozen years of his laborious life among that people. There were difficulties, but success had a

peculiar charm, and true piety an apostolic flavor, in that land. To his long and frequent absences the leaders in London objected; but Wesley's prophetic answer was: "Have patience, and Ireland will repay you." An efficient native ministry was raised up; a distinct, though not an independent, religious connection was formed; so that the Irish Methodists had their own Annual Conference, became a distinguished part of the Wesleyan body, and have had the gratification of presenting to the Wesleyan itinerancy some of its most able and useful ministers. Among these may be mentioned Thomas Walsh, Henry Moore, William Myles, Walter Griffith, Gideon Ousley, and Adam Clarke, to say nothing of those who are now serving their generation, by the will of God, both at home and in the wide field of missions.

American Methodism is indebted for some of its best ministers and members to the Emerald Isle. Strawbridge, Embury, and Drumgoole were only the first installment of spiritual wealth drawn from that source. In Ireland some of the richest trophies of Methodism were won, and there some of its rarest incidents occurred. "Swaddlers" the witty sinners dubbed the new sect. Cennick was preaching in Dublin on a Christmas-day. His text was Luke ii. 12: "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger." A drunken fellow, who was listening at the door to pick up something by which he might ridicule this new religion, hearing the word "swaddling" often repeated, ran along the street exclaiming, "O these people are swaddlers, they are swaddlers!" The name quickly took, and became the badge of opprobrium through Ireland. Even the eloquence of Whitefield could not charm the rioters. Once he was near being killed outright. "I received many blows and wounds—one was particularly large and near my temples. I thought of Stephen, and was in hopes, like him, to go off in this bloody triumph to the immediate presence of my Master." He used to say, in speaking of this event, that in England, Scotland, and America he had been treated only as a common minister of the gospel, but that in Ireland he had been elevated to the rank of an *apostle*, in having had the honor of being stoned. In his American tours he often entertained friends with a history of narrow escapes from the mobs while preaching in the old country. A Virginia lady, who died at a great age, used to tell how he would catch her on his lap, saying: "Come here, my lit-

the girl," raising his wig and taking her hand, "here, put your finger in that gash—there is where the brickbat hit me."

At the Annual Conferences from time to time a few clergymen are seen. Wesley sought their coöperation as a body with small success. On his fingers he might have counted those of the Established Church who helped him to inaugurate the religious revival. Of Meriton little is known. He was in Cornwall once when Charles Wesley was preaching "against harmless diversions," having three clergymen among his auditors. "By harmless diversions," exclaimed the preacher, "I was kept asleep in the devil's arms, secure in a state of damnation for eighteen years!" No sooner were the words uttered than Meriton added aloud, "And I for twenty-five!" "And I," cried Thompson, "for thirty-five!" "And I," said Bennett, the venerable minister of the church, "for about seventy!" Hodges was the rector of Wenvo, in South Wales, and his heart and pulpit were always open to the Wesleys whenever they visited the principality. The brothers often mention him in their journals, and always with respect and affection. He stood by them when they preached in the open air, and cheerfully bore a share in their reproach. Henry Piers, the vicar of Bexley, and his excellent wife, were both brought to the knowledge of the truth through the instrumentality of Charles Wesley, and were cordially attached both to him and his brother. Some of John's early publications were written in Piers's house, to which he retired as a quiet asylum from his public toils. Samuel Taylor was descended from the celebrated Dr Rowland Taylor, who was forcibly ejected from his church in "bloody Mary's" reign; whom Bonner was about to strike with his crosier, and was only hindered by Taylor telling him he would strike back. He was vicar of Quinton in Gloucestershire, and, like Wesley, went out into the highways and hedges, and was a sharer in the brutal persecutions of Wednesbury, and other places. The parents of Richard Whatcoat, one of the first American bishops, belonged to Taylor's parish; and Richard, when a child, sat under his ministry.

In time Grimshaw, incumbent of Haworth, came on. He was converted through the labors of a Methodist, and so helped and coöperated with the itinerant preachers in his part of the country that they were called "Grimshaw's preachers." He visited the classes frequently, attended and preached at the quarterly-

meetings, and held love-feasts in the Societies. He maintained intimacy with the preachers, entertained them at his house, and built a chapel and dwelling-house for them at his own expense. The landlord at Colne complained that Grimshaw had preached in that town "damnation beyond all sense and reason," and that "every week, and almost every day, he preached in barns and private houses, and was a great encourager of conventicles." On account of his preaching excursions through his parish and beyond it, and his outdoor, off-hand talking and praying, he was reported to his bishop by the clergy; but his lordship had too much policy or piety to deal hardly with the good man. Grimshaw afterward observed to a party of friends: "I did expect to be turned out of my parish on this occasion, but if I had, I would have joined my friend Wesley, taken my saddle-bags, and gone to one of his poorest circuits." Four hamlets were comprised in his parish. He preached in these villages monthly, in order to reach the aged and infirm. Frequently he would preach before the doors of such as neglected the parish worship: "If you will not come to hear me at the church, you shall hear me at home; if you perish, you shall perish with the sound of the gospel in your ears." Vincent Perronet was vicar of Shoreham, in the county of Kent. He entered fully into those views of divine truth which the Wesleys inculcated, and became a spiritual and holy man. Two of his sons became itinerant preachers; he wrote various tracts in defense of the Wesleyan tenets; to him Wesley's "Plain Account of the People called Methodists" was originally addressed; and to the end of life he was the cordial friend and the wise adviser of John and Charles Wesley, under all their cares.

The old Methodists were remarkable for their singing. "Happy people love to sing." Naturally, the two brothers were full of poetry; and religion fanned the fire into a holy flame. Their taste in music may be gathered from Wesley's directions to the preachers: "Suit the tune to the words. Avoid complex tunes, which it is scarcely possible to sing with devotion. Repeating the same words so often, especially while another repeats different words, shocks all common sense, necessarily brings in dead formality, and has no more religion in it than a Lancashire horn-pipe." On one occasion he writes: "I was greatly disgusted at the manner of singing. Twelve or fourteen persons kept it to themselves, and quite shut out the congregation." It has been

estimated that during his life-time there were published no fewer than six thousand six hundred hymns from the pen of Charles Wesley only. While he was preaching two and three times a day, during the intervals of public worship he was engaged in the composition of hymns. When on his way from Bristol to Newcastle, says he: "Near Ripley, my horse threw and fell upon me. My companion thought I had broken my neck; but my leg only was bruised, my hand sprained, and my head stunned—which spoiled my making hymns, or thinking at all, till the next day." He wrote that animated hymn beginning,

See how great a flame aspires,  
Kindled by a spark of grace,

on the joyful occasion of his ministerial success, and that of his fellow-laborers, in Newcastle and its vicinity. The imagery, doubtless, was suggested by the large fires connected with the collieries, which illuminate the whole of that part of the country at night.

At Cardiff he writes: "My subject was wrestling Jacob. Some whole sinners were offended at the sick and wounded, who cried out for a physician. But such offenses must needs come." After preaching on the same topic at Gwennap Gap, that grand amphitheater for field-preachers in Wales, and at the New Room in Bristol, and elsewhere, and being thoroughly saturated with the theme, he composed the hymn,

Come, O thou Traveler unknown,  
Whom still I hold, but cannot see.

The venerable Dr. Watts, then rich in years and honors, was too generous and pious to regard with envy the gifts conferred upon Charles Wesley. "Wrestling Jacob" is said to have especially arrested his attention; and, with a magnanimity worthy of his character, he exclaimed, "That single poem is worth all the verses I have ever written!"

At forty years of age Charles Wesley was married. Marmaduke Gwynne, of Garth, Wales, was one of Howell Harris's converts. His wife was one of six heiresses, inheriting each £30,000. Their mansion, with its twenty domestics and private chapel and chaplain, and nine children, would hardly be selected as the place for training the wife who first graced the itinerancy. "I expressed the various searchings of my heart in many hymns

on the important occasion," says Charles. Seventeen hymns, which he wrote at this time, on the subject of his marriage, have been preserved in his neat handwriting. Preliminaries being concluded to the satisfaction of all parties, Wesley's journal tells the rest (April 8, 1749): "I married my brother and Sarah Gwynne. It was a solemn day, such as became the dignity of a Christian marriage." Charles's account is characteristic:

Not a cloud was to be seen from morning till night. I rose at four; spent three hours and a half in prayer, or singing, with my brother. At eight I led my Sally to church. My brother joined our hands. It was a most solemn season of love. I never had more of the Divine presence at the sacrament. My brother gave out a hymn. He then prayed over us in strong faith. We walked back to the house, and joined again in prayer. Prayer and thanksgiving was our whole employment. We were cheerful, without mirth; serious, without sadness. A stranger that intermeddled not with our joy said it looked more like a funeral than a wedding. My brother seemed the happiest person among us.

Perhaps there was never a happier marriage. Small in person, cultivated in mind and manners, a sweet singer, she accompanied her husband in many of his long and rapid journeys, bearing with cheerfulness the inconveniences of an itinerant life, and also the scorn and violence of profane men, when he preached to them in the fields, highways, and other places of public resort. As she was greatly admired by him, he expressed a satisfaction perfectly natural in saying, "All look upon my Sally with my eyes." She went with him to Bristol, Bath, London, and several other towns, and was everywhere treated with the utmost respect as the amiable wife of one of the most useful men. According to the style of that age, she usually rode behind him on horseback, meeting with adventures which she was accustomed to relate pleasantly to the end of her very protracted life.

Soon after his marriage, Charles Wesley rented a small house in Bristol, and on the first of September he and his wife took possession of it, and commenced housekeeping. Referring to its dimensions, he remarks it was "such a one as suited a stranger and pilgrim upon earth." Mrs. Wesley adapted herself readily to her altered circumstances, on leaving the ample mansion of Garth, and taking up her residence in a humble cottage. She wrote with her own hand, in a manner the most neat and elegant, an inventory of the furniture with which they were provided. This document has been preserved among the family records—proof of her care and economy and of the limited scale

of their establishment. There they were accustomed to accommodate the itinerant preachers. John Nelson, John Downes, William Shent, and other men of kindred spirit and habits, were among their frequent guests. To the end of her life she used to speak of them with considerable emotion, remarking that she never met with persons better behaved, or more agreeable in their spirit and manners. Divine grace supplied the fictitious aid of education and social culture.

The death of their first-born, when only a few years old, by small-pox, was closely connected with the dangerous illness of Mrs. Wesley from the same disease. After her recovery, her features were so completely changed that the most intimate friends could not recognize her countenance. Her husband showed the tenderness and strength of his affection by declaring that he admired her more than ever. She was about twenty years younger than himself; and now that she had lost her beauty, she had also lost her very youthful appearance; so that the unseemly disparity between their ages was no longer perceptible.

Following his rule, "We would not make haste—we desire barely to follow Providence, as it gradually opens," Wesley began to provide for the education of the children of his preachers, and for Christian education generally. He "enlarged" the existing school at Kingswood, an unknown lady giving him £800 toward defraying the expenses. The school for the children of the colliers was not closed. It continued to exist more than sixty years. But in 1748 another school, for another class of children, was attached to this, and really became the Kingswood School, so famed in Methodist annals—for above half a century Methodism's only college; one of Wesley's favorite haunts; the *alma mater* of scores who did great service in Church and State; a homestead in which Methodism lingered till 1852. The visitor of to-day finds there a reformatory for vicious youth. Wesleyan pupils have been drawn away to ampler accommodations and more convenient localities at Bath, and Birmingham, and London.

Some of Wesley's rules for Kingswood could have been made only by a man who had no boys and never had been a boy himself. His half dozen teachers, his housekeepers, his servants, and his pupils, with their parents, were a load to carry. "I wonder," he says, "how I am withheld from dropping the whole design; so many difficulties have continually attended it." But success was

finally achieved; education by the Church was put on the right basis; and the Wesleyan educational systems, in both hemispheres, are the fruit of that handful of corn, waving like Lebanon.

Among the questions asked at the first Conference, and answered apparently without any dissent, was this: "Can we have a seminary for laborers?" They were not yet ready; the answer was, "If God spare us till another Conference." Accordingly, at the next session it was asked, "Can we have a seminary for laborers yet?" "Not till God gives us a proper tutor," was the reply. It was easy to get teachers for Kingswood School; but to teach the teachers, to train the laborers, required peculiar moral and mental fitness. Money, though scarce, was more plentiful than such men. The question was a standing one, and by and by proper tutors were raised up among themselves—men who not only knew the doctrines but the economy of Methodism—trained in it and devoted to it. Some of the ablest were detailed to this service, and the well-endowed biblical and theological schools of England and America are the answer to Wesley's question a hundred and forty years ago.

The Foundry provided a room for the publication and sale of books. This original book-room was a permanent feature. The Conference early ordained that every circuit was to be supplied with books by the Assistant. A return was to be made quarterly of money for books from each Society, and thus began that organized system of book and tract distribution which has secured to Methodism an extensive use of the religious press.

One of the most successful means adopted by the Wesleys for promoting religion was the publication, in a cheap and popular form, of interesting and instructive books. Before he went to Georgia, John Wesley published a single sermon, besides a revised edition of Kempis's "Christian Pattern." Later, he entered upon a course of literary labor of the most gigantic kind, in connection with his traveling, preaching, and pastoral care. At an early period he sent forth three volumes of sermons, explaining the leading doctrines which he had been accustomed to preach. In providing cheap literature, he anticipated modern times by many years; and in this kind of service he labored almost alone for nearly half a century. Moral and sacred poetry he recommended, and published selections of this kind in three volumes; and portable editions of Milton and Young, with notes explaining



the difficult passages, and directing attention to the finest paragraphs. He published, in a quarto volume, an amended translation of the New Testament, with explanatory notes, remarkable for spirituality, terseness, and point. A similar work, but less original and much less successful, he published on the Old Testament in three quarto volumes.

Most of Wesley's publications were small and cheap; but they had an immense circulation, and not only paid expenses, but left a profit. In a sermon, written in the year 1780, he apologetically remarks: "Two and forty years ago, having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books than any I had seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny apiece; and afterward several larger. Some of these had such a sale as I never thought of, and, by this means, I unawares became rich. But I never desired or endeavored after it. And now that it is come upon me unawares, I lay up no treasures upon earth; I lay up nothing at all. I cannot help leaving my books behind me whenever God calls me hence; but, in every other respect, my own hands will be my executors." Such was Wesley's charitable use of this source of income that it is estimated he gave away in the course of his life more than a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. In his "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," he said: "Hear ye this, all you who have discovered the treasures which I am to leave behind me: If I leave behind me ten pounds (above my debts and my books, or what may happen to be due on the account of them), you and all mankind bear witness against me that I have died a thief and a robber." The state of his affairs at his death justified this pledge.

The son, if not wiser, was more practical than the father. Compare *Dissertationes in Librum Jobi*—that six hundred page folio, in Latin, which not one man in a million has read—with the series issued by the founder of Methodism called "A Christian Library," consisting of extracts and abridgments of the choicest pieces of practical divinity which have been published in the English tongue, in fifty volumes. This work was begun in 1749, and completed in 1755. Folios and quartos had to be reduced to 12mo volumes. Some were abridged on horseback, and others at way-side inns and houses where Wesley tarried for a night. Such an enterprise had never before been attempted. It was an effort to make the masses—his own Societies in particular—ac-

quainted with the noblest men of the Christian ages. His design was to leave out whatever might be deemed objectionable in sentiment, and superfluous in language; to divest practical theology of technicalities and unnecessary digressions; and to separate evangelical truth from Pelagian and Calvinistic error.

Independently of his own works, which occupy fourteen large octavo volumes, John Wesley abridged, revised, and printed no fewer than one hundred and seventeen distinct publications, reckoning his "Christian Library," his histories, and his philosophy, as only one each; and the brothers, separately and unitedly, published near eighty poetical tracts and volumes, most of which were the compositions of Charles Wesley, and adapted to the use of public, domestic, and private devotion.\*

Charles Wesley's happy marriage appears to have been the means of deepening his brother's conviction that it is not good for man to be alone, and of inducing him to form the resolution of entering into the same state. The object of his choice was a widow, Grace Murray. She was among the first converts at the Foundry, but being a native of Newcastle, Wesley had employed her there to superintend the orphan-house and regulate the female classes. Her ability to be useful and her zeal recommended her to wider services. Of very humble origin, she is described as "possessed of superior personal accomplishments, with a mind cultivated by education, and an imagination lively in a high degree." Wesley used to call her his right-hand. He proposed marriage to her. She declared her readiness to accompany him to the ends of the earth, and confessed that the honor of being thus allied to him was a distinction for which she had not dared to hope. But he was busy going far and wide, and delays happened and hinderances. Many in the Societies of London and Bristol disapproved. Grace Murray was not equal to such a queenly position, in their opinion. The preachers, not knowing how much Wesley's heart was in the matter, interfered. They thought such a marriage would be a *mésalliance*—calculated to injure their leader's influence with the general public—likely to give an advantage to his enemies, would create disaffection, and circumscribe his labors; and so Charles, with the connivance of Whitefield and others, brought about a hasty marriage of Grace

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\* Jackson's Life of C. Wesley and his Centenary volume.

Murray with John Bennett—one of Wesley's itinerants. They crushed the feelings of the man, in order to maintain the dignity and usefulness of the minister. How deeply they wounded him they realized when it was too late. Perceiving Wesley's trouble, Whitefield wept and prayed over him, and did all he could to comfort him. The two brothers fell on each other's necks in tears. Wesley writes (Oct., 1749):

The sons of Zeruiah were too hard for me. The whole world fought against me; but above all, my own familiar friend. Then was the word fulfilled: "Son of man, behold! I take from thee the desire of thine eyes at a stroke; yet shall thou not lament, neither shall thy tears run down." The fatal, irrecoverable stroke was struck on Tuesday last. Yesterday I saw my friend (that was), and him to whom she is sacrificed. But "why should a living man complain?"

He had this interview with Grace Bennett three days after her marriage. For thirty-nine years they never met again: the meeting then was soon over; and he was never heard to mention her name afterward.

Bennett soon became an Independent minister—embraced Calvinism—abused "Pope John," and after ten years died. One of his sons became the pastor of a congregation near Moorfields. His widow returned to the Methodists, was useful as a leader of classes, and died at an advanced age.\*

For nothing was John Wesley more remarkable than the forgiveness of injuries, especially when he saw in the offender signs of regret. Charles knew that he had no gift of government, and supposed that his brother's marriage would be followed, as his own had been, by narrowing his itinerant field; and then the Societies would rapidly drift into Independency, and the revival movement cease.

Wesley's next matrimonial movement precluded any interference. On February 2, 1751, Charles's journal has this item: "My brother sent for me and told me he was resolved to marry. I was thunderstruck, and could only answer, he had given me the first blow, and his marriage would come like the *coup de*

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\*This was the cruellest stroke of Wesley's mortal life. After his death verses were found which he wrote to ease his heart. The first of twenty-eight we give:

O Lord, I bow my sinful head!  
 Righteous are all thy ways with man  
 Yet suffer me with thee to plead,  
 With lowly rev'rence to complain;  
 With deep, unutter'd grief to groan,  
 O what is this that thou hast done?"

*grace.* Trusty Ned Perronet followed, and told me the person was Mrs. Vazeille; one of whom I had never had the least suspicion." A fortnight later the London papers published the marriage of the Rev. John Wesley to a merchant's widow of large fortune. The large fortune consisted of £10,000 invested in three per cent. consols, and was wholly secured to herself and her two children. The general opinion at first was that she was "well qualified for her new position; she appeared to be truly pious, and was very agreeable in her person and manners." She understood that he was not to abate his itinerant labor; nor did he abate it. Two months after the marriage, with a sly hint at Charles possibly, Wesley wrote in his journal: "I cannot understand how a Methodist preacher can answer it to God to preach one sermon or travel one day less in a married than in a single state. In this respect surely 'it remaineth that they who have wives be as though they had none.'"

His wife traveled with him for some time, but soon grew dissatisfied with a life so incompatible with the convenience of her sex and the habits of her former life. Irritation came to be her chronic state, and when her mind was irritated, nothing could please her. The weather was either intolerably cold or hot; the roads were bad, the means of conveyance unbearable; the people by whom they were accommodated impolite; the provisions were scanty or ill prepared; and the beds were hard. Her husband's official duties—preaching, meeting classes, visiting the sick, regulating the Societies, carrying on an extensive correspondence, and writing constantly for the press—occupied so much of his time that he could not pay her all the attention she required. Unwilling to travel herself, she became equally dissatisfied with his habitual absence. At last her discontent took the form of a monomaniacal jealousy. She would drive a hundred miles to observe out of a window who was in the carriage with her husband on his entering a town. At first her complaints were carried to Charles, but soon even he and his wife became objects of bitter hostility, so that her language to them was scarcely less severe than that applied to her hapless husband. Charles generally called her "My best friend," for no other person told him of his faults with half the vehemence and particularity which characterized her rebukes and admonitions. This significant sentence occurs in a letter to his wife:

"I called, two minutes before preaching, on Mrs. Wesley, at the Foundry; and in all that time had not one quarrel."

The gravest feature of the business was her opening Wesley's letters, intercepting and interpolating them; giving some to his enemies, and publishing others in the public prints. In 1771 she left his house, with the assurance that she would never return. He knew not, he says, the immediate cause of her determination, and adds: "*Non eam reliqui, non dimissi, non revocabo*"—I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her. There was a patched-up peace, with various intermissions, and she died ten years afterward. With her children, Wesley's relations were affectionate and pleasant. Southey says of the Xantippe, who tormented him in such a manner by her outrageous jealousy and abominable temper, that she deserves to be classed in a triad with the wife of Socrates, and the wife of Job, "as one of the three bad wives."

Berridge, the quaint bachelor vicar of Everton—one of the evangelical clergy whose itinerant zeal was largely useful in founding Lady Huntingdon's Connection—wrote to the Countess concerning one of her preachers: "No trap so mischievous to the field-preacher as wedlock, and it is laid for him at every hedge-corner. Matrimony has quite maimed poor Charles, and might have spoiled John and George if a wise Master had not graciously sent them a brace of ferrets."

If it was not for Wesley to enjoy the comforts of married life, he had the opportunity to exhibit patience. During a domestic wretchedness of thirty years, he kept on his way of duty, unwavering; abated nothing of consecration; and, withal, an unruffled temper seems to have been joined to an unflagging energy. Henry Moore, his biographer and intimate friend, records: "He repeatedly told me that he believed the Lord overruled this painful business for his good; and that if Mrs. Wesley had been a better wife he might have been unfaithful in the great work to which God had called him, and might have too much sought to please her according to her own views."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**Temporary** Decay of Whitefield's Popularity; Visits Scotland; Third Visit to America—Morris's Reading-house in Virginia—Samuel Davies—Commissary at Charleston tries to Suspend—No Intolerance in that Colony—South Carolina Unfavorable for this—Whitefield Buys a Plantation; Preaching to Negroes; Chaplain to Countess of Huntingdon; Among the Great.

WHITEFIELD'S situation on his second return to England was not comfortable. The separation from the Wesleys was not all. His popularity seemed to have passed away; the thousands who used to assemble at his preaching had dwindled down to two or three hundred. Worldly anxieties were fretting him, and those of a kind which made the loss of his celebrity a serious evil. The Orphan-house was to be maintained; he had now nearly a hundred persons in that establishment who were to be supported by his exertions; he was above £1,000 in debt on that score, and he himself not worth £20. Seward, the wealthiest and most attached of his followers was dead, and had made no provision for the payment of a heavy bill on the Orphan-house account, which he had drawn, and for which Whitefield was now responsible, and threatened with arrest. He called it a trying time. "Many, very many of my spiritual children," says he, "who at my last departure from England would have plucked out their own eyes for me, are so prejudiced by the dear Messrs. Wesleys dressing up the doctrine of election in such horrible colors, that they will neither hear, see, nor give me the least assistance." But his popularity soon returned; there was no resisting the charm of his eloquence, and no denying the genuineness of his religion. Yielding to many invitations, he visited Scotland, where the Whitefieldian type of Methodism was more acceptable than the Wesleyan. His success in Scotland was, in some respects, greater than it had been in England. "Glory be to God," he writes, "he is doing great things here. I walk in the continual sunshine of his countenance. Congregations consist of many thousands. Never did I see so many Bibles, nor people look into them with such attention when I am expounding. Plenty of tears flow from the hearers' eyes. I preach

twice daily, and expound at private houses at night, and am employed in speaking to souls under distress great part of the day. Every morning I have a constant levee of wounded souls, many of whom are quite slain by the law." In the great city churches, and on braes and hill-sides, and in public parks, Whitefield had wonderful scenes—"equal to some in America."

The partisans of the Solemn League and Covenant hardly endured the fact that he had not signed that formula, but they charitably considered that he had been born and bred in England, and knew no better. He records: "The awakenings of people have been, in a good many, attended with outcries, faintings, and bodily distresses; in many more the work has proceeded with great calmness; but the effects in both sorts are alike good and desirable." One of their chief ministers says: "Never did I see such joyous melting in a worshiping assembly. There was nothing violent in it, or like what we may call screwing up the passions; for it evidently appeared to be deep and hearty, and to proceed from a higher spring." Inquiry-meetings, and societies for prayer and praise, increased amazingly. Preaching and expounding several times a day, Whitefield could not meet the eager desire of the multitude to hear the word. This is the report of the minister at Dundee:

The Lord is a sovereign agent, and may raise up the instruments of his glory from what Churches or places he pleases; and glorifies his grace the more when he does it from those Societies whence and when it could be least expected. Though Mr. Whitefield be ordained, according to his education, a minister of the Church of England, yet we are to regard him as one whom God has raised up to witness against the corruptions of that Church; whom God is still enlightening, and causing to make advances toward us. He has already conformed to us, both in doctrine and worship, and lies open to light to conform to us in other points. He is thoroughly a Calvinist, and sound on the doctrines of free grace, on the doctrine of original sin, the new birth, justification by Christ, the necessity of imputed righteousness, and the operations of the Holy Ghost. These he makes his great theme, drives the point home to the conscience, and God attends it with great power. And as God has enlightened him gradually in these things, so he is still ready to receive more light, and so soon as he gets it he is more frank in declaring it. God, by owning him so wonderfully, is pleased to give a rebuke to our intemperate bigotry and party zeal, and to tell us that "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but the new creature."

Returning to the Tabernacle, and thence ranging about in England for awhile, Whitefield again visited Scotland, where the aristocracy especially received and honored him and his gospel.

He received £500 on his first visit for the Orphan-house, and a large amount on the second. On his way to London, he was still further encouraged by receiving letters from America informing him of the remarkable success of the gospel there, and that God had stirred up some wealthy friends to assist his orphans in their late extremity. His journal records this timely mercy: "The everlasting God reward all their benefactors." I find there has been a fresh awakening among them. I am informed that twelve negroes, belonging to a planter lately converted at the Orphan-house, are savingly brought home to Jesus Christ."

Late in 1744 he was again in America, where he spent four years. Though feeble in health, beginning in the Middle States, he took a circuit of fifteen hundred miles through the Northern and Eastern States, preaching with the old-time power. The opposition had organized: there were "testimonials," personal and official, against him, but to no purpose; the Lord was for him. In Maryland and Virginia the people flocked "as doves to the windows." As itinerating was his delight, and America a new world particularly pleasing, he now began to think of returning no more to his native country. "The door for my usefulness opens wider and wider," he writes. "I love to range in the American woods, and sometimes think I shall never return to England any more." The awakening of five or six years ago had not ceased. As he moves on southward, his journal says:

The gentleman offered me £800 a year, only to preach among them six months, and to travel the other six months where I would. Nothing remarkable happened during my way southward; but when I came to Virginia, I found that the word of the Lord had run and was glorified. During my preaching at Glasgow some persons wrote some of my extempore sermons, and printed them almost as fast as I preached them. Some of these were carried to Virginia, and one of them fell into the hands of Samuel Morris. He read and found benefit. He then read them to others; they were awakened and convinced. A fire was kindled; opposition was made; other laborers were sent for.

This account may be supplemented by a Virginia historian. Morris, a plain, devout man, obtained from a young Scotchman a volume of Whitefield's sermons. He invited his neighbors to come and hear him read them, and while he read many were convinced of sin. Thus, while Whitefield was passing in a flame of revival along the sea-board, an obscure brick-layer in the woods of Hanover was reading to weeping sinners the burning words that fell from his lips in Scotland. Had he known this.



how eagerly would he have come and taught them the way of the Lord more perfectly! Morris read to his rustic congregation from other books, such as "Boston's Fourfold State," and "Luther on Galatians." The excitement spread through the settlement; his house was too small to hold the crowds that flocked to his reading, and they determined to build a house "merely for *reading*," for none of them had yet attempted even public prayer. It was called "Morris's Reading-house," and is forever connected with the history of Presbyterianism in Virginia. Reports went far and wide of the scenes at the "Reading-house," and Morris was invited to read his good books in various places. Thus the work extended with power through that portion of the country where priests and people had sunk into a cold and heartless formality.\*

Morris's hearers and himself, having absented themselves from church on Sundays, were called to account by the court, and took shelter under the name of Lutherans—as they knew no other, and Luther's book had been useful to them. Soon a Presbyterian minister—Robinson—came that way, and taught them that they were really Presbyterians, and took them nominally under his care, and passed on; for he durst not tarry in that colony. Three years afterward (1746), Governor Gooch, of the colony, issued his proclamation forbidding, under severest penalties, the meetings and teachings of Moravians and Methodists. "How numerous these obnoxious dissentients may have been, or how far His Excellency succeeded in suppressing them, we have not the means of ascertaining."†

The grateful people of Hanover raised a sum of money and offered it to Mr. Robinson.‡ He declined it; they insisted; but he still refused. They found out where he would spend his last night in the county, and gave the money to the gentleman of the house, who privately placed it in his saddle-bags. In the morning his saddle-bags were handed him. Suspecting an artifice, he opened them, and behold! the money "was in the sack's mouth." He told them he would take the money not for his own use, but to be devoted to the education of a poor young man of promise and piety, then studying for the ministry. "As soon as he is licensed," said Robinson, "we will send him to visit you. You may now

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\* Bennett's Memorials of Methodism in Virginia. † Hawks's Narrative of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. ‡ Bennett's Memorials.

be educating a minister for yourselves." This young man was Samuel Davies. He appeared in 1747, with license from the General Court, to preach "in and about Hanover at four meeting-houses." Great was the joy of the people, and the work was such as angels might approve. In a few years there were over three hundred communicants, including a number of negroes, forty of whom the young pastor had baptized on a profession of faith. He felt a deep interest in the slaves, and embraced every opportunity for giving them religious instruction. He says, in 1755: "The number of slaves that attend my ministry at particular times is about three hundred." But the watchful guardians of that attenuated form of the apostolic succession which had survived "Morris's Reading-house," are to be heard from. We quote from one of their own authors:

Mr. Davies, however, did not carry on his work without encountering opposition. The officers of the government, who of course adhered to the Establishment, strenuously contended that his proceedings were illegal, inasmuch as the English Act of Toleration did not extend to Virginia. This position was denied by the Dissenters, who claimed equal rights with their brethren at home [England], and the matter was brought before the courts of the colony.\*

The point was argued by Peyton Randolph, attorney-general, on one side, and by Mr. Davies on the other; and the Dissenter gained his cause by a majority of the court. When afterward, on the appointment of Princeton College, Mr. Davies visited England to solicit aid for the college, he obtained from the attorney-general, Sir Dudley Rider, an official declaration that the English Act of Toleration was the law of Virginia. Armed with this opinion, on his return he resumed and enlarged his labors in the colony, and continued them until 1759 when, on the death of Jonathan Edwards, he was appointed President of Princeton College. This remarkable man died at the age of thirty-seven.

In North Carolina Whitefield labored, but, as he says, "for too short a time, and little was done." Orphan-house troubles oppressed him as he drew near to Georgia. His own words are, "At times they almost overwhelmed me." In Charleston he always found friends, and he records:

God has put into the hearts of my South Carolina friends to contribute liberally toward purchasing in this province a plantation and slaves, which I purpose

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\* Hawks's Narrative of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia.

to devote to the support of Bethesda. Blessed be God! the purchase is made. Last week I bought, at a very cheap rate, a plantation of six hundred and forty acres of excellent land, with a good house, barn, and outhouses, and sixty acres of ground ready cleared, fenced, and fit for rice, corn, and every thing that will be necessary for provisions. One negro has been given me. Some more I purpose to purchase this week. An overseer is put upon the plantation, and I trust a sufficient quantity of provisions will be raised this year.

On his first visit to Charleston, Whitefield was cordially received by Commissary Garden, who invited him twice into his pulpit, and assured him that he would defend him with his life and property, should the same arbitrary proceedings ever be commenced against him which Mr. Wesley, his predecessor, had met with in Georgia.\* But at the time of his second visit a great offense had occurred—the Methodists had taken to field-preaching, and Whitefield led them. He entered Charleston “in a blaze of glory” after filling a long list of outdoor and indoor appointments. The Commissary’s fine church, St. Philip’s, was not open to him any more. And this episcopal shadow undertook to do what the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury never ventured upon—to suspend Whitefield.

There was no Established Church in South Carolina, and never had been. The proprietaries of that colony had asked John Locke to frame the “fundamental constitution;” and he incorporated into it freedom to worship God; no legal preference was given one sect over another. The document was approved in 1669, and the original copy—in the handwriting of Locke, it is believed—is preserved in the Charleston Library.

Another circumstance concurred to make the Commissary’s closed doors and his wrath impotent. Admiral de Coligny had endeavored, the century before the English settlement in South Carolina, to establish a colony of his brother Protestants, the Huguenots, at Port Royal and Beaufort. That emigrant scheme failed, but the next did not. The favorite mistress of Louis XIV., Madame de Maintenon, was heard to say, “If God spares him, there will be only one religion in his kingdom.” Accordingly the revocation of the Edict of Nantes was signed at

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\*All the colonies were considered as under the care of the Bishop of London; and he was represented in each by a “commissary who supplied the office and jurisdiction of a bishop in outlying places of the diocese.” The power was very restricted. Dr. Blair, in Virginia, was the first commissary appointed for America, in 1689. He held the office fifty-three years.

Fontainebleau, 1685; all churches of the Protestants were closed, their religious worship was prohibited, and their ministers required to leave the country in fourteen days on pain of the galleys. This brought to Carolina, and especially to Charleston, a large number of Huguenots—than whom Continental Europe could not furnish a nobler race. Their family names may still be recognized in the annals of Church and State, and have especially enriched Methodism—an intelligent, energetic, chivalrous, liberty-loving people.

The existence of laws framed by John Locke, and the influence of such principles as French Protestants represented, made South Carolina the last place in the world for the display of petty ecclesiastical tyranny. Not invited into St. Philip's Church, and refused the sacrament by the Commissary, Whitefield found plenty of room and welcome in other churches, and preached to the edification of multitudes. Whereupon he was cited to appear before the Commissary and four of his clergy to answer for the offense of having "officiated as a minister in divers meeting-houses in Charleston, in the province of South Carolina, by praying and preaching to public congregations, and at such times to have omitted to use the form of prayer prescribed in the 'Book of Common Prayer.'" Whitefield took an appeal from the colonial to the home ecclesiastical court. It is claimed by some that the Court of Appeal treated the case as unworthy of notice; by others, that Whitefield neglected to prosecute the appeal. So it was, at the end of twelve months, Whitefield being absent in England, Commissary Garden proceeded:

We therefore pronounce, decree, and declare that the said George Whitefield, for his excesses and faults, ought, duly and canonically, and according to the exigence of the law in that part of the premises, to be corrected and punished, and also to be suspended from his office; and, accordingly, by these presents, we do suspend him, the said George Whitefield; and for being so suspended we also pronounce, decree, and declare him to be denounced, declared, and published openly and publicly in the face of the Church.

This, in 1741. Whitefield made twelve visits after that to South Carolina and Georgia, with increasing power and popularity. Garden in Charleston would have treated him as Cauton in Savannah did Wesley; but times had changed. On this visit, Whitefield found more friends than ever, and by Carolina help was enabled to keep Bethesda from sinking. The charter

of the Georgia Trustees would soon expire, and then he hoped, under better government, to do more for the Orphan-house. Indeed, he projected a classical school in connection with it, and made a beginning before leaving for the Northern States, where he closed his third American campaign. He says (September 11): "We saw great things in New England. The flocking and power that attended the word was like unto that seven years ago. Weak as I was, and have been, I was enabled to travel eleven hundred miles, and preach daily."

His strength was giving way; indeed, he was sick and under a physician; but, according to announcement, a congregation had met to hear a sermon. This is his account:

While the doctor was preparing a medicine, feeling my pains abated, I on a sudden cried: "Doctor, my pains are suspended; by the help of God, I will go and preach, and then come home and die!" In my own apprehension, and in all appearance to others, I was a dying man. I preached, the people heard me as such. The invisible realities of another world lay open to my view. Expecting to stretch into eternity, and to be with my Master before the morning, I spoke with peculiar energy. Such effects followed the word, I thought it was worth dying for a thousand times. Though wonderfully comforted within, at my return home I thought I was dying indeed. I was laid on a bed upon the ground, near the fire, and I heard my friends say, "He is gone." But God was pleased to order it otherwise. I gradually recovered; and soon after, a poor negro woman would see me. She came, sat down upon the ground, and looked earnestly in my face, and then said, in broken language: "Master, you just go to heaven's gate, but Jesus Christ said, Get you down, you must not come here yet, but go and call some more poor negroes." I prayed to the Lord, that if I was to live, this might be the event.

About this time, being much troubled with stitches in his side, he was advised to go to the Bermudas, for the recovery of his health. He accordingly embarked, and landed there March, 1748. His daily preaching on the islands was an event in their religious history, and prepared the way for future missionaries to the slaves. His own account being taken for it, he was not a good negro-preacher, as every one acquainted with that business will see on reading it:

Sunday, May 1. I preached twice with power, especially in the morning, to a very great congregation in the meeting-house; and in the evening, having given notice, I preached about four miles distant, in the fields, to a large company of negroes, and a number of white people who came to hear what I had to say to them. I believe in all there were nearly fifteen hundred people. As the sermon was intended for the negroes, I gave the auditory warning that my discourse would be chiefly directed to them, and that I should endeavor to imitate the example of Elijah, who, when he was about to raise the child, contracted himself to its length.

The negroes seemed very sensible and attentive. When I asked if they all did not desire to go to heaven, one of them, with a very audible voice said, "Yes, sir." This caused a little smiling; but in general every thing was carried on with great decency; and I believe the Lord enabled me so to discourse as to touch the negroes, and yet not to give them the least umbrage to slight their masters. If ever a minister in preaching needs the wisdom of the serpent to be joined with the harmlessness of the dove, it must be when discoursing to negroes. Vouchsafe me this favor, O God, for thy dear Son's sake!

May 2. Upon inquiry, I found that some of the negroes did not like my preaching because I told them of their cursing, swearing, thieving, and lying. One or two of the worst of them, as I was informed, went away. Some said they would not go any more. In my conversation these two days, with some of my friends, I was diverted much, in hearing several things that passed among the poor negroes, since my preaching to them. One of the women, it seems, said "that if the book I preached out of was the best book that was ever bought at London, she was sure it had never all that in it which I spoke to the negroes." The old man who spoke out loud and said "Yes" when I asked them whether all the negroes would not go to heaven, being questioned by somebody why he spoke out so, answered that the gentleman put the question once or twice to them, and the other fools had not the manners to make me any answer, till at last I seemed to point at him, and he was ashamed that nobody should answer me, and therefore he did. Another, wondering why I said negroes had black hearts, was answered by his black brother thus: "Ah, thou fool! dost thou not understand it? He means black with sin."

After three months' stay, Whitefield left. "They have loaded me with provisions for my sea store, and in the several parishes, by a private voluntary contribution, have raised me upward of one hundred pounds sterling. This will pay a little of Bethesda's debt, and enable me to make such a remittance to my dear yoke-fellow as may keep her from being embarrassed, or too much beholden in my absence. Blessed be God for bringing me out of my embarrassments by degrees!" Having transmitted to Georgia what was given for the Orphan-house, and dreading to go back to America in that season of heat, for fear of relapsing, he took the opportunity of sailing for England, and reached London in July, 1748. On Whitefield's return, he found himself in no very agreeable situation. His congregation at the Tabernacle was sadly scattered, and all his household furniture had been sold to help pay the Orphan-house debt, which yet was far from being canceled.

His congregation was soon recruited, and a very unexpected door was opened to him. The Countess of Huntingdon, before his arrival, had ordered Howell Harris to bring him to her house at Chelsea, as soon as he came on shore. He went, and having

preached twice, the Countess wrote to him that several of the nobility desired to hear him, and she desired him to be one of her chaplains. Lords Chesterfield and Bolingbroke were among his auditors at Chelsea, the Countess having invited those persons who stood most in need of repentance. The former complimented the preacher with his usual courtliness; the latter is said to have been much moved by the discourse, and invited Whitefield to visit him. Such progress did serious piety make among this class of people that the cynical Walpole, in May following, wrote to a friend on the Continent: "If you ever think of returning to England, you must prepare yourself with Methodism. This sect increases as fast as almost any religious nonsense ever did. The Methodists love your big sinners, as proper subjects to work upon; and, indeed, they have a plentiful harvest."

This introduces us to a new chapter in Methodism; and as its messengers pass from the negroes to the nobility, and from Moorfield Commons to the drawing-room of peers, we shall have opportunity to witness their fidelity.

Whitefield visited Scotland the third time, in the autumn of this year, and it was not his last visit. From his leaving London to his reaching Edinburgh, he preached ninety times, to about one hundred and forty thousand people. At Lady Huntingdon's he writes (October 11): "For a day or two, her ladyship has had five clergymen under her roof. Her house is indeed a Bethel. To us in the ministry, it looks like a college. We have the sacrament every morning, heavenly conversation all day, and preach at night. This is to *live at court*, indeed."

If true religion could by any means become fashionable, the result would put ministerial fidelity to tests as severe as any that persecution can invent. In Scotland the doors were open to Whitefield. "Saints," says he, "have been stirred up and edified; and many others, I believe, are translated from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. The good that has been done is inexpressible. I am intimate with three noblemen and several ladies of quality who have a great liking for the things of God. I am now writing in an earl's house, surrounded with fine furniture; but, glory be to free grace, my soul is in love only with Jesus."

Not all the doors were open. The extremists there insisted on the divine right of presbytery as much as the extremists in

England insisted on the divine right of prelacy. In the synod of Glasgow a motion was made to prohibit or discourage ministers from employing Whitefield. The speeches in favor of the motion made these points: He was a priest of the Church of England; he had not subscribed the Solemn League and Covenant; chimerical scheme of the Orphan-house; want of evidence that the money collected by him is rightly applied; asserting assurance of faith; and lastly, his being under a sentence of suspension by Commissary Garden, from which he had appealed to the High Court of Chancery, and made oath to prosecute that appeal in a twelvemonth, and yet it was never prosecuted.

On the other hand, the ministers who were against the motion, spoke in this manner: "I blush to think [said one] that any of our brethren should befriend a proposal so contrary to that moderation and catholic spirit which now is, and I hope ever will be, the glory of our Church. I am sensible that many things in the Church of England need reformation; but I honor her, notwithstanding, as our sister Church. If Bishop Butler, Bishop Sherlock, or Bishop Secker, were in Scotland, I should welcome them to my pulpit."

Said another bold Scot:

Whether Mr. Whitefield's scheme of the Orphan-house be prudent or not, it is demonstrable it was honestly meant. The magistrates of Savannah published, three years ago, in the *Philadelphia Gazette*, an affidavit that they had carefully examined his receipts and disbursements, and found that what he had collected in behalf of the orphans had been honestly applied; and that, besides, he had given considerably of his own property. Lastly, with respect to the prosecution of his appeal, Mr. Whitefield exerted himself to the utmost to get his appeal heard, but could not prevail on the Lords Commissioners so much as once to meet on the affair; they, no doubt, thinking of Mr. Garden's arbitrary proceedings with the contempt they deserved. But, say some, "Mr. Whitefield, being under a suspension not yet reversed, is now no minister." But for what was he suspended? Why, for no other crime than omitting to use the form of prayer prescribed in the communion-book, when officiating in a Presbyterian congregation. And shall Presbyterian ministers pay any regard to a sentence which had such a foundation?

The motion was lost. Whitefield went on, preaching three and once as often as seven, times in a day. This could not last; want of sleep and loss of appetite and general debility ensued "I am brought now," says he, "to the short allowance of preaching but once on week-days, and twice on a Sunday." He was



not afraid of emotional religion nor ashamed of it, anywhere. Reporting the result of a preaching excursion where "we had not one dry meeting," he refers to a learned dry Calvinistic friend thus: "Had my dear Mr. Henry been there, to have seen the simplicity of so many dear souls, I am persuaded he would have said, *Sit anima mea cum methodistis.*"

Whitefield is said to have preached eighteen thousand sermons during the thirty-four years of his ministry. The calculation was made from a memorandum-book in which he noted down the times and places of his preaching. This would be something more than ten sermons a week.

Wesley tells us that he preached about eight hundred sermons in a year. In fifty-three years, reckoning from the time of his return from America, this would amount to forty-two thousand four hundred.

But the exhaustive outlay of Whitefield in delivering a sermon was greater than Wesley experienced. After preaching, both alike, instead of taking rest, were offering up prayers, intercessions, with hymns and spiritual songs, in every house to which they were invited. The history of the Church of Christ affords few instances of men thus incessantly employing their whole strength—as it were, every breath they drew—in the business of their sacred vocation.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Honorable Women not a Few—The Conversion of a Countess; Her Devotion to Methodism; Espouses the Calvinistic Side; Her Work—Chapels—Trevecca College—Dartmouth—Newton—An Archbishop Reproved—Forced out of the Establishment—Her Death.

SELINA SHIRLEY, Countess of Huntingdon, was descended of an ancient and honorable house. Her husband, of the house of Hastings, was the ninth Earl of Huntingdon; and his sisters, Lady Betty and Lady Margaret Hastings, were women of excellence. The Countess of Huntingdon was the *Lady Bountiful* at Donnington Park, and took less pleasure in the fashionable follies of the great than in ministries of charity among her dependents and neighbors. She frequently attended Fetter-lane Society. Her conversion followed that of her sister-in-law, Lady Margaret, who, spending some time at Ledstone House, a family estate in Yorkshire, was induced by curiosity to hear Ingham preach. The Methodist was invited to preach at Ledstone church, and became a frequent visitor at the Hall. The two sisters made an open profession of faith, and were ever bright examples of it. In 1741, Ingham was married to Lady Margaret, twelve years his senior. The marriage was performed at the residence of her brother in London. The Countess assured the Wesleys of her cordial sympathy with them. The first Conference, having been invited in a body, was received at her mansion in London, and Wesley preached on the text, "What hath God wrought?" Piers and Hodges took part in the service; while Maxfield, Richards, Bennett, and Downes sat around them, recognized as genuine though unordained ambassadors of Christ.

That a peeress of the realm should espouse and zealously support a cause and a people everywhere spoken against, led her husband (who seems to have treated her with highest consideration) to bring about an interview with Bishop Benson, who had been his tutor. The bishop endeavored to convince her of the unnecessary strictness of her sentiments and conduct. In reply she pressed him hard with scripture, as to his own responsibilities; his temper was ruffled and he lamented that he had ever

laid hands on George Whitefield, to whom he attributed all this trouble. "My lord," was her reply, "mark my words: on your dying-bed that will be one of the few ordinations you will reflect upon with complacency." And the event verified the prediction. When near death, years afterward, the bishop sent ten guineas to Whitefield, as a token of regard and veneration, and begged an interest in his prayers.

The Lord was merciful; and through this honorable woman, pure in life as she was exalted in character and station, the neglected rich and great had an opportunity to hear the gospel. Her house was turned into a chapel, both in London and at her country-seats, and there the Wesleys and Whitefield, with other evangelical clergymen—Romaine, Hervey, Hill, Shirley, Toplady, Venn, Berridge, and Madan—expounded the word and administered sacraments. Lords and ladies, dukes and duchesses, who filled the parlors, heard faithful warnings. The Duchess of Buckingham writes, in reply to an invitation:

I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most repulsive, and strongly tinctured with impertinence and disrespect toward their superiors, in perpetually endeavoring to level all ranks, and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting, and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding.\*

Lady Huntingdon was left a widow, in the thirty-ninth year of her age, and her husband showed his confidence in her judg

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\*The author of the "Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon" (two volumes), from which our information is derived, tells of another person in high life who had an experience similar to "common wretches:" no other than the titled mistress of George II. "Mr. Whitefield's lectures to the 'brilliant circle' at Lady Huntingdon's were evidently as faithful as they were eloquent. The well-known Countess of Suffolk found them so. Lady Rockingham prevailed on Lady Huntingdon to admit this beauty to hear her chaplain; he, however, knew nothing of her presence; he drew his bow at a venture, but every arrow seemed aimed at her. She just managed to sit out the service in silence, and when Mr. Whitefield retired she flew into a violent passion, abused Lady Huntingdon to her face, and denounced the sermon as a deliberate attack on herself. In vain her sister-in-law, Lady Betty Germain, tried to appease the beautiful fury, or to explain her mistake; in vain old Lady Elenor Bertie and the Duchess Dowager of Ancaster, both relatives of Lady Suffolk, commanded her silence; she maintained that she had been insulted. She was compelled, however, by her relatives who were present to apologize to Lady Huntingdon. Having done this with a bad grace, the mortified beauty left the place to return no more."

ment by leaving the entire management of his children and their fortunes in her hands. Controlling her own time and large resources, she now began to give the gospel to the poor. Accepting the Calvinistic view, she found in Whitefield's Methodism the form of Christianity to which she devoted her life. Accompanied by her chaplains she made tours through the kingdom, when great congregations were gathered and preached to. She built churches at Bath and Brighton, wherein titled and noble visitors heard Methodist preaching, while they sought health and pleasure. Hannah More piqued herself on her attachment to the Established Church, and, by way of disproving the charge that she was a Methodist, wrote: "Had I been irregular, should I not have gone sometimes, during my winter residence at Bath, to Lady Huntingdon's chapel, a place of great occasional resort?"

Horace Walpole heard Wesley at this Bath chapel, and his criticism on the preacher as well as on the house is of record: "Wondrous clever, but as evidently an actor as Garrick." As for the sermon: "There were parts and eloquence in it; but toward the end, he exalted his voice and acted very vulgar enthusiasm." On one occasion Wesley, after preaching here, writes: "I know not when I have seen a more serious, a more deeply attentive congregation. Is it possible? Can the gospel have a place where Satan's throne is?"\*

Walpole called the Countess "The Queen of the Methodists." The scholarly and pious Venn styled her better, "A star of the first magnitude in the firmament of the Church." This chapel was supplied with evangelical preachers of highest ability, each serving for a week or a month, or longer, and must more or less have leavened the class of people who resorted to Bath. From this pulpit the gospel sounded out through a wide region, and reached the ears of those who seldom hear the plain-dealing messengers of truth. Occasionally one who came for the healing waters died. How the funeral of a Scotch earl was "improved," Whitefield tells: The corpse was taken to this chapel; house crowded; "three hundred tickets given out to the nobility and gentry;" proper hymns sung; the sermon followed; and for "five days together," says Whitefield, "we have been attending at this house of mourning. Surviving relations sit around the corpse, attended by their

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\*The Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon.

domestics and supporters, twice a day. Two sermons every day; life and power attend the word; and I verily believe many dead souls have been made to hear the voice of the Son of God." At the conclusion, the remains of Earl Buchan were shipped to Scotland; and the historian adds, "The young Earl of Buchan now became very conspicuous in the ranks of Methodism."

This remarkable woman purchased theaters, halls, and dilapidated chapels in London, Bristol, and Dublin, and fitted them up for public worship. Numerous chapels were also erected by her aid throughout England, Wales, and Ireland. She mapped out the land into districts, and sent out evangelists from among her most successful adherents, to travel and to preach. She bore the traveling expenses of an active corps of able ministers, and kept them circulating through the kingdom. Her gifts for religious purposes exceeded \$500,000. She sold her jewels to build chapels for the poor. Her aristocratic equipage and liveried servants were parted with, that she might save in order to give. It was at Lady Huntingdon's house that Lord Dartmouth became acquainted with Wesley and Whitefield. His open and earnest Methodism did much to help those who were suffering its reproach. John Newton, because of his connection with the Methodists, was refused ordination by the Archbishop of York, but Lord Dartmouth prevailed on the Bishop of Lincoln to ordain him, and presented Newton to the vicarage of Olney. He patronized the college in America that is named for him, and contributed liberally to the Orphan-house in Georgia. To him Cowper alludes in his poem on Truth:

We boast some rich ones whom the gospel sways,  
And one who wears a coronet and prays.

Newton, after giving to Wesley reasons, in his health and circumstances, which forbade him to be an itinerant preacher, adds as the "weightiest difficulty:" "Too many of the preachers are very different from Mr. Grimshaw; and who would wish to live in the fire? So that, though I love the people called Methodists, and suffer the reproach of the world for being one myself, yet it seems not practicable for me to join further than I do."

The vicar of Olney was instrumental in the conversion of Thomas Scott, a neighboring clergyman who took vows and entered into orders as godless a man as any in his parish. He tells how the work began that ended in giving to the Church an edi-

fyng commentator, an industrious author, and one of the founders of the Evangelical party:

In 1774 two of my parishioners, a man and his wife, lay at the point of death. I had heard of the circumstance, but according to my general custom, not being sent for, I took no notice of it till one evening—the woman being dead and the man dying—I heard that my neighbor, Mr. Newton, had been several times to visit them. Immediately my conscience reproached me with being shamefully negligent in sitting at home within a few doors of dying persons, my general hearers, and never going to visit them. Directly it occurred to me that whatever contempt I might have for Mr. Newton's doctrines, I must acknowledge his practice to be more consistent with the ministerial character than my own. He must have more zeal and love for souls than I had, or he would not have walked so far to visit, and supply my lack for care to those who, as far as I was concerned, might have been left to perish in their sins. This reflection affected me so much that without delay, and very earnestly—yea, with tears—I besought the Lord to forgive my past neglect; and I resolved thenceforth to be more attentive to this duty; which resolution, though at first formed in ignorant dependence on my own strength, I have, by Divine grace, been enabled hitherto to keep.

By reading "The Force of Truth," wherein Scott details his experience and how he was brought to Christ, Wilberforce is said to have been converted. Wilberforce's "Practical View" is credited, in turn, with the conversion of many who gave character to the philanthropy and Christian enterprise of his day.

Lady Huntingdon's chapels so increased that she was led to provide a college for the education and training of preachers. Trevecca House, in South Wales, an ancient castle, was procured and fitted up, and opened for religious and literary instruction in August, 1768. Great preparations had been made. Whitefield preached the dedicatory sermon: "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee." And on the following Sunday he preached to thousands in the college-court: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Describing the scenes of spiritual interest, and the unction upon sermons, exhortations, sacraments, and love-feasts, that attended the dedication, he writes: "What we have seen and felt at the college is unspeakable." The preparation of the college not only exhausted the available means of the Countess, but drew liberally upon her rich friends. Ladies Chesterfield and Glenorchy, and other devout and aristocratic persons, gave large help. John Wesley approved her plan. John Fletcher was the first president, and one of his converted colliers from Madely Woods was the first student that entered

the college. Joseph Benson, the commentator subsequently, was head master. The scheme was to admit only such young men as were truly converted, and meant to devote themselves to God's service. Students were at liberty to stay three years, during which time they were to have education and maintenance free, and a suit of clothes once a year. Afterward they might enter the ministry of the Established Church or any other Protestant denomination. Indeed, she seemed to encourage rather than discourage their taking orders in the Establishment, and exerted her influence to procure ordination and livings for them, thinking thus to spread a revival influence where it would be most useful, and where approach by other means was slow and difficult.

Trevecca for years was the head-quarters of the Calvinistic Methodists. It supplied their pulpits, and afforded important ministerial contributions to the Dissenters and the Established Church. The Countess resided there much of her time; it was convenient for the extended work which she was sustaining, and she could readily dispatch assistance from it to her many pulpits. Horses were kept to convey students on Saturdays to distant points, while nearer appointments were visited on foot. Frequently they went forth on remote "rounds" preaching in fields, barns, market-places, and private houses. The annual "commencements" were like Methodist camp-meetings. On one occasion a thousand and three hundred horses of visitors and guests were turned into a large field, besides what were stationed in neighboring villages, and a great number of carriages. A scaffold was erected at one end of the college-court, on which a book-stand was placed, and thence six or seven preached successively, to attentive and lively congregations. A visitor speaks of three hundred people breakfasting together on the premises; of sermons, exhortations, sacraments, love-feasts, in English and Welsh; of "many very hearty amens, and a fervent crying of 'Glory to God!'"

Fletcher kept up his labors at Madely, and in the circuit he had formed around it; but he found time to superintend Trevecca. Benson describes his visits to the school of the prophets:

Here it was that I saw—shall I say—an angel in human flesh? I should not far exceed the truth if I said so. Prayer, praise, love, and zeal—all ardent, elevated above what one would think attainable in this state of frailty—were the elements in which he continually lived. Languages, arts, sciences, grammar, rhet-

oric, logic, even divinity itself, as it is called, were all laid aside when he appeared in the school-room among the students. And they seldom hearkened long before they were all in tears, and every heart caught fire from the flame that burned in his soul.

Closing these addresses, Fletcher would say: "As many of you as are athirst for the fullness of the Spirit of God follow me into my room." Two or three hours were spent there in such prevailing prayer as seemed to bring heaven down to earth. "Indeed," says Benson, "I frequently thought, while attending to his heavenly discourse and divine spirit, that he was so different from, and superior to, the generality of mankind as to look more like Moses, or Elijah, or some prophet or apostle come again from the dead, than a mortal man dwelling in a house of clay."

A refreshing instance of Christian fidelity in high places is on record. The Archbishop of Canterbury, during one winter of fashion, had been giving balls and convivial routs at the archiepiscopal palace.\* His wife "eclipsed all the gay personages." The Methodist Countess, through her titled relatives, "obtained an audience with his Grace of Canterbury," and respectfully but earnestly remonstrated. She was snubbed, and his Grace violently abused those whom he was pleased to brand as Methodists and hypocrites. Lady Huntingdon then obtained an audience with the king, through Lord Dartmouth. George the Third, if not religious, was religiously inclined, and the archbishop soon received an admonitory letter:

MY GOOD LORD PRELATE: I could not delay giving you the notification of the grief and concern with which my heart was affected at receiving authentic information that routs had made their way into your palace. From the dissatisfaction with which you must perceive I behold these improprieties, not to speak in harsher terms, and on still more pious principles, I trust you will suppress them immediately; so that I may not have occasion to show any further marks of my displeasure, or to interpose in a different manner. May God take your Grace into his almighty protection!

G. R.

A large building in London, known as the Pantheon, which had been erected as a place of Sunday amusements in a wicked and very neglected district, fell into the Countess's hands, and was fitted up, like another Foundry, for a church. "My heart," she says, "is strangely set upon having this temple of folly dedicated to Jehovah Jesus." Great expense was incurred, and great preparations made, and great preachers engaged. The

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\*Dr Cornwallis was then Archbishop of Canterbury.



scheme moved off prosperously, with crowded congregations and gracious revivals; but a catastrophe was at hand. The avaricious pluralist whose parish embraced the Pantheon—named Spafiel's Chapel—put in his legal claims and pressed them. He claimed the right of nominating ministers to its pulpit, and of appointing a clerk whose salary should be paid by the proprietors; of reading prayers and preaching and administering the sacraments there, whenever he wished; of receiving a stipend (£40 per annum) for appointing such Methodist clergy as the proprietors desired, for the chapel; that all the money collected at the sacrament and from sittings be under the control of his church-wardens; and, for due performance of this, that the proprietors enter into a bond of £1,000.\*

The chapel authorities not yielding to his terms, Sellen instituted suit in the Spiritual Court of the Bishop of London, against the two clergymen officiating at Spafiel's Chapel for irregularity in preaching in a place not episcopally consecrated, and for carrying on divine worship there contrary to the wish of the minister of the parish. Verdicts were obtained against them, the chapel was closed, and one of the finest congregations in London was dispersed. As a peeress of the realm, the Countess supposed she had a right to employ her own chaplains at any time and place, and she put them in the stead of the two suspended ministers. But Sellen, like another Sanballat, renewed the attack in the ecclesiastical courts against every clergyman she engaged to preach there; and the verdict being against them, they discontinued their services. Harassed and obstructed, the Countess was obliged to take shelter under the Toleration Act. "In this case," she wrote, "I am reduced to turn the finest congregation not only in England, but in any part of the world, into a Dissenting meeting." Lady Huntingdon and her preachers were strongly attached to the Church of England; used its forms as far as practicable in worship, and preached its doctrines, and hoped to carry on a work of revival within its pale—if not helped, at least not prohibited; but that hope is at an end. In creed and at heart she and her chaplains and co-workers were not Dissenters. But in order to protect her chapels from suppression, or appropriation by the Established Church, she had to avail herself, in 1779, of the law by which all religious societies that would not be sub-

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\* The Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon.

ject to the established ecclesiastical power, could control their own chapels by an avowal, direct or virtual, of Dissent. Her "Connection" thus took its place among the Dissenting Churches, and that brilliant and powerful band of preachers whom she had kept circulating through the kingdom under the best advantages, stirring spiritual stagnation and enlightening darkness, among the high and low—Romaine, Madan, Venn, Berridge, Townsend, and others—ceased preaching in her chapels.

When the lease upon Trevecca expired, the college was removed nearer the metropolis, and exists to our day as Cheshunt College. There John Harris, author of "Mammon," and other useful and evangelical scholars have been bred and labored.

The Countess died at the age of eighty-four, uttering with her last breath: "My work is done. I have nothing to do but to go to my Father." She left her fortune for the support of sixty-four chapels which she had helped to build in various parts of the kingdom.

The Lady Huntingdon Connection was in part absorbed by the Dissenting Churches, and went to revive "the languishing Non-conformity of the age;" but its greater result was the contribution made, directly and indirectly, to the Evangelical, or Low-church, element in the Establishment, from which have sprung measures in legislation and in philanthropy that have signalized the past and the present century.

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